

The Hunting Shack – Chapter 1

“Did you double buy staples like we talked about?”

“I couldn’t. The prices went up again and I almost couldn’t afford the regular groceries. The cheapest bread they had was \$1.79 a loaf and the good stuff was \$3.99. Plain hamburger, that greasy stuff that shrinks so badly, was \$4.99 a pound on sale.”

“I checked with Stan and he told me that the company wouldn’t authorize more overtime due to falling sales. I’m sorry...we’re going to have make do with my regular pay.”

“Don’t worry, Don; Jeanie’s husband Bob was laid off and they’re in worse shape than we are. If they don’t cut back on their lifestyle, they’ll lose everything.”

“Can you see Jeanie doing that? Bob will pump gas, if he has to, rather than give up their lifestyle.”

“A minimum wage job wouldn’t even touch their grocery bill.”

“She cooks at home? I thought that they usually ate out.”

“That ended when all of their cards maxed out. She said she had to put back some of the things she picked up and used up all the cash she had. She was so embarrassed.”

“I hope we never find ourselves in that position. I was thinking about looking for a temporary second job because of some the preps I wanted that we don’t have.”

“Like what?”

“I’d like some kind of generator so we could keep our food frozen and refrigerated if we lost power; more ammo for my rifle and shotgun. We have enough for both of our pistols. Which reminds me, did you get your CCW?”

“It was approved and I now have the endorsement on my driver’s license.”

“Good; in that case, I have a present for you. Hang on a minute, I’ll be right back.”

“Open it, I ordered that when we bought you the Beretta.”

“Galco?”

“Yep, the same place I got my Miami Classic rig. The purse is ambidextrous so you can carry it on either shoulder and still access your pistol.”

“I’ll only carry one extra magazine, if that’s okay with you.”

“That should be enough, most likely you never have to draw it, let alone shoot it. Those 124gr +P Gold Dot rounds should stop anyone not wearing body armor dead in their tracks.”

“What do I do if they have body armor?”

“What else; put one right between their baby blues.”

“Failure to stop drill?”

“Not if you already know they have a vest, no. If you can’t tell, start with body shots and add the third shot unless they’re already going down.”

“Where would you look for work?”

“I had it mind to look for something in the area of manual labor and kill two birds with one stone.”

“Which two birds?”

“Earn some extra money and work off some of this gut.”

“What size of generator do you want; a home standby?”

“Not that big. Six to eight kilowatts, gas or diesel, and portable enough to move around should we need to.”

“Let’s eat, it’s ready.”

I had in mind a generator I’d seen, a 7kw Briggs & Stratton PowerBOSS with a 12kw surge capacity. It burned gasoline, had a 7-gallon tank, wheel kit and would run for 13 hours on the one tank of gas. If we filled it and kept 7 5-gallon cans of stabilized gas, we’d have 42-gallons and about 78-hours of run time and we could keep everything cold for a couple of weeks, running it part time. Bob and Jeanie had a natural gas powered 45kw residential standby. It was a huge 45kw Cummins Onan generator that could put out 350 amps.

I asked if he had a conversion kit to switch it to propane if the need arose. He didn’t. I asked why he didn’t buy the model that used dual fuel, both natural gas and propane. The propane tank was ugly, he claimed. On top of that, he couldn’t move the generator because it weighed almost a ton. I had concluded if we had a generator that large, it would be trailer mounted and burn diesel fuel.

I got a part time job shoveling dirt, of all things. It paid a fair wage and we began saving to buy the 7kw generator. Lowe’s had their 5-gallon Blitz cans on sale and I bought 7. I bought a pint of PRI-G and each week, I filled one can, slowly accumulating our supply

of gasoline. Then, I was given an empty 55-gallon drum by a friend that he'd already cleaned out. So, I/we put the gas from the cans into the drum and kept filling cans. We finally had the money to buy the generator and it happened to be on sale. Using the leftover money, we bought a second pint of PRI-G to put up and filled most of the cans, allowing us to fill the tank on the generator, finish filling the drum and having 3 cans still full.

At the same time, Marie was able to get a few extra items by watching for sales on things we wanted. It was like the Dirksen quote, it added up. The job lasted and I saved up and bought a case of Remington low recoil 00 buck. I saved some more and bought a case of #4 buck and still later, a case Brenneke slugs. Some weeks when there was a really good sale at the grocery store, my ammo money bought more food.

Ammo had been generally unavailable or high priced since November 4, 2008. The price of 7.62x51mm had gone through the roof. What I ended up buying was Prvi Partizan 7.62x51mm 145 Grain Full Metal Jacket, a case of 1000 for around \$700 and change. My source was MidwayUSA. That was a shame because my rifle was better than that. What I really needed was Black Hills 168gr BTHP or 165gr BTSP. My rifle, you see, was a Springfield Armory Loaded. We had almost purchased the National Match at the time, but comparing features, we decided on the Loaded and I bought my magazines mail order at \$20 a pop. The money saved paid for 20 magazines and shipping. I also bought some Radway Green.

The National Match and the Loaded basically both had the same barrels in terms of weight and twist, medium weight, 1:11. The Loaded had its name because it was 'loaded' with National Match features, the ones that counted. Not all of them, of course, just the important ones. Introduced in 1957, the rifle was still in use by our military, although it had been replaced by the M16 in 1964.

I got lucky when I went to Iraq; I was a Designated Marksman with an M14 type rifle. When I got out, the first thing I bought was the rifle from Springfield Armory. My rifle in Iraq had been a M21 with scope. My personal rifle was a Loaded and, later, I got the Harris bipod, A.R.M.S. mounts and a Leupold Mark IV variable power scope. Like I said, my rifle was better than my ammo and it was like using a coat hanger as the antenna for your all band Yaesu radio. No, not yet, but it's on the list.

"I thought you wanted that Black Hills ammo."

"I do Marie, but the stuff I bought will fill the gap until we can afford some."

"Don't forget to put that target Mini-14 on the list too, with 20 round Ruger magazines."

"It will be easier now that we have the gas cans, gasoline and the generator. I'll save up and buy one case of the Black Hills at a time. Half as many rounds, but these rounds hurt."

“What do you mean?”

“They’re either Hollow Point or Soft Point. That Serbian stuff is full metal jacket.”

“Is that legal?”

“Yep, I’m a civilian now and the Hague Convention of 1899 doesn’t apply to me. If I could get some surplus German 7.62, that would be ideal.”

“Why?”

“German 7.62x51mm NATO FMJ has an unusually thin cannelure i.e. the groove running around the circumference of a bullet which is used to crimp it to the cartridge case. When the bullet hits the target it fractures along the cannelure and fragments, causing massive tissue damage like the 5.56x45 mm NATO bullet but on an even larger scale.”

“Why don’t you get some of that?”

“When I saw it, we didn’t have the money. When we had the money, it was all gone.”

That in two sentences seems to be the story of our lives. By hoarding the money from the dirt shoveling job, we acquired one case of the Black Hills at a time. The first case was HP and the second SP. I then returned to buying a 500 round case about every other month. I’d seen a Marine in Iraq using a Mossberg 590A1 and when I bought my shotgun, that’s the model I specified. While Marie had the standard Beretta 92FS aka M9, I wanted more power and spent the last of our gun buying money on a barely used Para Ordinance P-14. Marie also wanted a 20 gauge pump so her arms were the same as mine but favored her 5’2”, 105 pound frame.

Less than a year after we bought the generator, we had a winter ice storm roughly equal to the winter of 2008-2009 only worse. We lost power for 10 days and while we had to rely on the fireplace to keep warm, the generator kept our food frozen and refrigerated. I won’t say it paid for itself with that one instance; the weather had been funny lately, we heard warnings about global warming and were freezing our behinds off during the winters.

The job ended with the ice storm because I couldn’t get to the job and had I been able, the dirt was beneath 3” of ice. We had increased our supply of food faster than the ammo for obvious reasons; \$750 bought far more food than ammo. I could get to work after two days and Stan asked me if I wanted some overtime. It seems an order came during the days I was off and it was urgent. It involved welding up pieces for several jigs that had been fabricated during the past two days running on generator power. We had one welder that was portable with its own built in generator and I was the most experienced using it.

Time and a half is way more than I was making shoveling dirt and I told him yes. I called Marie and told her not to hold supper because I'd finally gotten some overtime and would be working 12 hours days, 7 days per week until the job was completed. Anything over 8 hours in a day is time and a half and anything over twelve hours per day was double time. On the sixth day, it was time and a half for the first eight and double time for the next four. On the seventh day, it was all double time. After that, you were in a new work week and it started over.

I worked 12 hours on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Although I lost pay for Monday and Tuesday, I earned the equivalent of 14 hours each of those five days, a total of 70 hours of straight time. The following week I worked 7 days straight finishing up the rush job. I earned the equivalent of 14 hours per day for Monday through Friday, Saturday paid the equivalent of 20 hours and Sunday paid the equivalent of 24 hours, a total equal to 114 hours of straight time. The job had been priced out cost plus, so the customer paid the bill.

"Wow, 184 hours equivalent, we can do a few things with that."

"Right Marie, pay more taxes."

"So what, even with the extra taxes you did well, 4½ weeks' pay in 12 days. Can I have my Ruger now?"

"Is there enough to pay for it?"

"Yes, and then some. I'll get the 20-round magazines and a case of ammo, plus I'll be able to buy more of the meat on sale this week."

"Can you handle it without me helping? I need a good night's sleep and it's back to the same old grind tomorrow."

"Sure, any particular order?"

"If your name was Annie, I could say Annie Get Your Gun, so make it Marie Get Your Gun."

"Good, I had the rifle and magazines on layaway so it won't eat up all of your hard earned money. I'll get 20 pounds of ground chuck, 6 packages of the Moran ground chuck patties, some round steak, and roasts if I see any that I like. Would you like sausage or bacon?"

"Yes. Get 2 or 3 of those small sized Cure 81s if you have the money. How are we on chicken?"

"There's not much left."

The Hunting Shack – Chapter 2

“Do they have those large breast quarters?”

“They did the last time I looked, the ice coated ones?”

“Yeah. Maybe 2 bags if you can manage it.”

“Anything else? Coffee, tea or me?”

“The last sounds the best but I’m too pooped to pop. Coffee if you can.”

I ate a sandwich and a bowl of soup, showered and crawled into bed. The next thing I remember was Marie waking me for breakfast at 6:30, pancakes and bacon. Man, was I tired. I took a quick shower to help me wake up, did the 3 S’s and dressed. My lunch box was waiting and I handed her the checkbook, gave her a peck and headed for work.

That evening when I got home she showed me her new rifle, pointed out the case of 1,000-rounds of BTSP ammo and handed me the cash register tape from the grocery store. She made out like a bandit, since our store runs their weekend sales from Friday through Monday. Our freezer was looking much better, with the additions. Marie probably got about double the amount of food I thought she would, but between the sales, the coupons and careful selection she squeezed those nickels until the buffalo’s growled or did whatever buffalo’s do. I had 2,500-rounds of .308 HP, 500-rounds of .308 SP and the 1,000-rounds of Prvi Partizan and was getting close, only two more cases.

Marie also bought 6 oil lamps from a clearance end cap for roughly 25% of their original price and 6 packages of 4 wicks each. She suggested that we get one or two 5-gallon diesel can(s) filled with kerosene. After we ate, I helped her put the food in the basement of our rented house.

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Bob and Jeanie had indeed lost their house. They were down to living in a one bedroom apartment with their extra furniture stored. I’ll give him credit; he sold off the standby generator before the bank got that too. He got \$12,500 for the package that he told me cost him \$20,000. They’d sold Jeanie’s H3 and Bob’s Corvette, leaving them with one car, a Ford Taurus. They also managed to sell the boat and trailer, again losing a good share of their investment.

One evening we decided to eat out to treat ourselves. Nothing fancy, just one of the older cafés in town. It was one of those, walk in, and grab a booth or a table kind of places. The waitress came with the order pad in one hand menus in the other.

“Jeanie?”

“Hi Marie, Don. Coffee?”

“Yes, please.”

She left to get the coffee pot and returned to fill our cups.

“How long have you been working here?”

“This darned economy...Bob can't get any decent work, you know. Three months, give or take. We sold off most of our stuff and got out of our credit card debt, but it's not easy. We filed for bankruptcy, it's just so embarrassing. Have you decided on what you'll have?”

“I have the broasted chicken breast quarter with fries, Don?”

“I'll take the chicken fried steak special.”

“It sounds to me like they're trying to get themselves out of the mess they created. I never thought I'd see the day where Jeanie was working a waitress job in a café.”

“She didn't say what Bob is doing. I wonder if he's working or not.”

“What was the new unemployment rate?”

“Fifteen point two percent. It's starting to look like we're having a second Great Depression.”

“Is your job secure?”

“It's a custom shop and while business is down, not many firms do what we do in this area. We're lucky we're renting our house instead of buying.”

“Why?”

“Uncle Pete has that hunting shack there next to the woods and if push came to shove, I'm sure he'd let us occupy it until things turned around. You've seen it; it's nothing fancy, but has a potbellied stove, a wood fueled cooking stove, a solar powered well and septic system plus the stool, sink and tub. It might not be the greatest experience, long term, but we'd get by.”

“If I remember right, there was a huge stack of firewood.”

“Unless it's been burned up and not replaced, there was.”

“Well, I'm glad I got those kerosene lamps now, just in case.”

“There’s always our emergency reserve savings. I don’t want to get into that money unless we’re absolutely desperate. We only have one gun left on the gun list to buy, your 20-gauge pump. What did you have in mind, a 500 Bantam?”

“Not this time, I want exactly the same Mossberg you bought.”

“Why? That’s a lot of gun for someone your size.”

“Because of the ammo; the way we’ve been doing it, we have different calibers of rifles and pistols, hence double the ammo. I’ve shot your shotgun and that low recoil ammo isn’t bad.”

Marie got her shotgun for her next birthday. I had finished buying Black Hills and had turned to buying her more rifle ammo. We spent some time on a range getting that harmonic dampener tuned to the ammo she was using. As far as buying guns went, we were done. When we had our ammo bought, it would be a simple matter of replacing what we shot. In addition to her Galco purse, we bought her a military issue holster for the M9.

“Did you hear about Bob and Jeanie?”

“What’s new?”

“The judge threw out their bankruptcy because they disposed of those things. He said they did it in anticipation of their bankruptcy filing.”

“Where does that leave them?”

“Jeanie didn’t know. I think they’ll just change their names and disappear.”

While it is probably done every day, doing that is not without its problems. You have to get a new social security number, new driver’s license and that usually means being fingerprinted...you can run, but you can’t really hide.

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“I’m sorry Don; we’ve lost too many orders and can’t keep the business going. Here’s your severance check. It includes severance, your accumulated sick time and vacation. The owner’s don’t plan on reopening. I’ve included a letter of recommendation in a separate envelope; I hope it helps.”

I was dumbfounded. The company had laid off two newer employees, but I hadn’t seen this coming. Make that 15.3%. On the way home, I considered our options. We had our emergency reserve savings, about a six month supply of food, no debt and few prospects of me finding another job. I knew when I arrived home during the middle of the work day, Marie would know immediately.

“Oh, you’re home? Temporary layoff?”

“The company is going out of business. I’m going to call Uncle Pete and see if using that hunting shack is a viable option. Thank God we’re past the lease and on a month to month rental.”

“Uncle Pete? Don. Say, is anyone occupying that hunting shack? Oh, the company I’ve been working for is going out of business and you know the state of the economy. You will? When? Great, we’ll begin packing.”

“What did he say?”

“The shack is available for as long as we need it. He’ll clean out his farm truck and come here to help us move our possessions. We have ten days to get everything packed up and ready to move. He also mentioned that you could help Sarah with the garden and canning for a share of the food and he had a bit of work I could do mending equipment.”

Mom and Dad divorced when I was 11. He took off, never to be seen again. Pete was Mom’s older brother and had been a big help when her melanoma spread to her other organs and killed her. Other vitals: Donald West, age 29; wife Marie West, age 27; no children unless we adopt. Hobbies include gardening (her), fishing (me) and shooting (both). Marie’s family lived in California and we lived in Missouri. Her parents were also divorced; her mother out running around and her father MIA. She and I were single children.

As preppers, we tried to cover all of the bases, but there were just too many to cover. We were basically well prepared for a natural disaster and a temporary economic disaster. We weren’t prepared for WW III, but the things we needed were on our ‘to buy list’. That included radiation sensors and equipment, communications gear, etc. I had a general class ham license as did Marie; they had eliminated the main obstacle, Morse code. Uncle Pete was also a ham, an Extra class with a fancy setup.

The easiest solution to the boxes we needed to pack everything was to buy U-Haul boxes. It took five days of steady work to pack everything we wouldn’t need until Pete showed up. Some things, like the ammo, were already boxed. We decided we could get by with locking the freezer and putting the contents of the refrigerator in our 100 quart Igloo cooler. We went to the store and bought enough frozen meals to allow us to pack everything in the kitchen.

It was cheaper than eating in a restaurant and we wouldn’t risk running into Bob and Jeanie. Would she rub it in if she found out I’d lost my job? At least that’s how Marie explained it to me. Marie also said we’d better be careful about our nicknames, what would people think if I called her Marie and she called me Donnie? They’d confuse us for Latter-day Saints.

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Pete showed up and we spent a few hours loading up. He had an appliance cart that saved the day. Some things went in my old beater, the cooler, generator, ammo and the drum and cans of gas. Our pitiful firearms collection went behind the seat. It was May Day, when they have the big march in front of the Kremlin and the English have big celebrations.

“What do you want to do, Don? We can unload it in the machine shed or at the shack.”

“For the moment, we want the refrigerator, freezer and our bed. Marie and I can come up and get the rest as we need it.”

“Fine. You never got the radio?”

“No sir. We got our general tickets but don’t have a radio.”

“I’ll give you a CB to keep in touch with the house, if you plan on running that generator.”

“We won’t run it all of the time, only to keep our refrigeration going. Marie loaded up on kerosene lamps.”

“Fine, but if they’re those cheap ones Wal-Mart sells, don’t try to read by them, you’ll end up going blind.”

They were indeed the cheap ones from Wal-Mart. The good ones weren’t on sale at 75% off. The shack had a few lamps mounted on the wall and with these new ones; I was hoping to get by. Marie agreed with me when I brought it up. We moved the freezer by emptying it, hauling it to the shack and going back for the food. Our next trip was for the refrigerator and the third was for our bed. I brought the cooler in after I unloaded the generator and got it running to chill the freezer and refrigerator. While it cooled Marie loaded the food back in and I assembled the bed.

After we finished with those tasks, we sat down to catch our breaths and to decide what else to bring. The 2 cans of kerosene, the 6 lamps, two comfortable chairs, our dresser and our portable radio. I figured I’d better get that mobile radio while it was being offered, I could take 12v (13.8) from the generator when it was running. It was just a mobile antenna but the shack was only about ½ mile from the house. When we went back, Sarah said to drop off our things and come back for supper, homemade bread, baked ham and mashed potatoes with ham gravy and Mexicorn.

The Hunting Shack – Chapter 3

We were around bright and early the next morning, had breakfast and headed to the house. Sarah had told Marie what needed done in the garden and Pete mentioned three things he wanted welded up before planting season. He had a Lincoln welder and I've never understood that, Pete didn't know how to weld. He claimed he got it cheap at a farm auction and thought it might come in handy someday. It was set up in the well house and had extra-long welding cables so a person could park the machine next to the well house and reach the machine to make the repair. When that wouldn't work, he'd have to dismantle the machine to get to the broken part.

He had a welding hood and one of those hand held plates that allow someone watch you weld, but he refused to learn. He said it would take all of his concentration just teaching me to farm. After the repairs were finished and he began to explain crop rotation, seed selection, cultivation schedules and harvesting times, I had to agree.

Marie, on the other hand, was having the time of her life working in a real garden. I may miss some plants, but I think there were corn, cantaloupe, pumpkins, acorn and butter-nut squash, watermelon, potatoes, beets, green beans, cucumbers, carrots, radishes, head and loose leaf lettuce, cabbage, plum and beefsteak tomatoes, sweet peas, snap peas, onions, pepper plants and chili plants. Sarah told Marie she would just take a little less to the farmer's market.

As we began to get settled in, Sarah came to the shack and taught Marie the trick to baking bread in a wood fired stove. She'd start her fire and begin build coals while she mixed the bread and let it raise. More wood would be added from time to time until the coals were just right and the bread was raised in the pans. Then, you could walk away and come back at the end of the day and have fresh bread in the oven, cool enough to eat.

I learned to drive a John Deere getting the corn planted in straight rows, cultivate the same without digging it up, mow and windrow alfalfa, stack bales, pick corn and combine beans. I also learned to use a milking machine, feed the hogs, feed the chickens, gather eggs, and feed the cattle, in no particular order of importance except for the milking, 5am and 5pm. Pete's milking machine was older than I was and worked fine other than being labor intensive.

"I've got an extra Icom IC706MKIIG radio if you don't mind an older one. It includes a power supply, desk mike but you'll need to get your own antenna."

"How come it's extra?"

"I got a Yaesu FTDX9000D and a tri-band VHF/UHF for the house and FT857Ds for the car and pickup."

"Why does that sound expensive?"

“Maybe because they were, \$10,000 for the FTDX9000D, almost \$700 apiece for the mobiles plus the desk mike, earphones, power supply.”

“It must be nice.”

“I’ve been working on it for a while. Another thing I ought to mention, the storm shelter roof fell in and we built a new one. Marie and you are welcome to use if needs be. It’s right where the old one was, but buried deeper and much larger. You can’t tell by looking but the shelter, barn, hog house and hen house all connected by culverts. It’s a tight fit, they’re only 48” in diameter, but they’re dry and well protected.”

“I’ll bet you get a crick in the neck moving around in those.”

“No way; I put in plywood floors. You lie down on a mechanics creeper and pull yourself along and the people on the other end can pull the creeper back with the clothesline. There’s a 100’ hank of clothesline for either way.”

We worked hard over the course of the summer but we were amply rewarded: a large supply of canned vegetables, a side of beef and a hog, butchered and wrapped plus a 500-gallon farm tank of gasoline for our generator. Sarah gave her old Presto pressure canner to Marie because she had two 41.5 quart All American pressure canners and the old one was ‘taking up space’. All it needed was a new ring, about \$10.

We seemed to have it made; our only utilities were gasoline and kerosene. Wood was available in the woods after hunting season and Pete had chainsaws, a wood splitter and everything else needed to cut firewood. At the same time, we couldn’t grow everything we needed and took to acquiring ‘the other food’ in 50 pound bags, locally if we could, mail order if we couldn’t. I do know that Pete and Sarah mail ordered two more units of LTS food for their shelter. When I picked up on that, I asked for a shelter tour.

“Ok, but this is just between you and us, agreed?”

“Sure, what’s the mystery?”

“I would have thought that with you being a prepper, you would have picked up on that when I told you the shelter was connected to the other buildings via culverts. I got the idea from a story I read at Frugal’s Forums. Bottom line; it’s a bomb shelter.”

“I suspected that but wasn’t sure. How many Missouri farmers have a bomb shelter?”

“You might be surprised; if you’re putting in a storm shelter, it’s only a little extra work, and a lot more expense, to go all of the way. The only targets are Kansas City, Whiteman Air Force Base and St. Louis, in my opinion. I couldn’t do much with the other buildings without starting over, except provide access. Like I said, don’t go blabbing this around. This is an American Safe Rooms blast door, that side room over there is the

generator room and the generator is fueled by a pair of used, recertified, 10,000-gallon tanks of stabilized diesel.”

“How big is this?”

“It’s 36’ square, just shy of 1,300ft². There’s bedroom for Sarah and me and a unisex bunkroom. Everything is electric powered and that room in the corner is the bathroom with a shower. There are lines from all of the antennas running to both the house and shelter. They switch over via shielded relays. Food is stored in that room over there along with my small armory and ammo. The air filtration system also came from American Safe Rooms. Since you can access the shelter from the other buildings, there is no escape tunnel or anything like that. What do you think?”

“Wow. How long have you had this?”

“Started working on it in 2004. Probably stupid, the Cold War ended in ’91. I have reservations about that. However, what got me started was John Kerry becoming the Democratic candidate for President. Well, he didn’t win, but a Democrat won in 2008 and I’m not so sure he’s not worse. You can’t negotiate with terrorists. And the economy? It doesn’t matter who caused the mess, what’s being done to get out of it isn’t working.”

So, I got my shelter tour and brought Marie up to speed over supper that night.

“When are you going to start cutting firewood?”

“Are we getting low?”

“No, but doesn’t it have to cure or something?”

“I’ll start by cutting deadfalls and move to cutting standing dead trees next year. How is our money holding out?”

“Not good, we’re down to the last thousand. What did you need?”

“Nothing, just curious. Maybe I can sell some firewood and split the money with Uncle Pete.”

“Maybe next year, he’ll give you some money instead of putting in a fuel tank. I’d like to have a prime power generator or a wind turbine or solar system so we had power fulltime and not have to run the generator for an hour at a time 4 times a day.”

“I’ll use his desktop and look into it.”

I checked the Cummins website and found something relatively new, the hybrid RV Quiet Diesel. The smallest unit was the 8/10, model 810HQDSA-6028A. Its average diesel usage varied from 0.11gph at no load to 0.76gph at full load. The downside was

the rpm, it wasn't 1,800. The 8.0 HDKK/1046 produced 8kw, 66.6amps and burned 0.13gph at no load up to 1.02gph at full load and the engine was still a stinking 3,600rpm. In order to get a longer lasting engine, the choice was the 10kw or 12.5kw QDRV genset. The 10kw unit, the 10.0 HDKCA, could produce up to 83 amps and its fuel usage ranged from 0.1gph at no load up to 1.1gph at full load. It was also about \$800 cheaper and more power than we would ever need, even if we moved back to town.

"Pete, where do you buy your diesel fuel?"

"You mean when I bought it or where do I get it now?"

"Where do you get it now?"

"I make it. I plant 80 acres of soybeans each year and that yields around 3,800 gallons of biodiesel. We just don't use all that much in a year and I've been selling the extra to a neighbor or two."

"What do you do with the meal?"

"Mix it in the livestock feed. I've thought about switching to canola. You get canola oil from it and can produce around 127-gallons of biodiesel per acre. The meal can be added to livestock feed just like the soybean meal."

"So you could produce over 10,000-gallons of biodiesel from the same 80 acres?"

"Sure could, why?"

"Marie brought up the subject of continuous power."

"I wondered how long that would take."

"Where did you get the used tanks?"

"From a fella I know, why, want one?"

"I really wouldn't mind. Could I get some biodiesel from you?"

"Don, what do you propose to use for a generator?"

"I've been looking at the Cummins Quiet Diesel RV units. The only way to get a 1,800rpm engine is to get a 10 or 12.5kw."

"Your circumstances may change and you'll need a large one; have you given that any thought?"

“The 12.5kw is about \$800 more.”

“So what, I’ll be buying and you’ll be paying me back, right?”

“I hadn’t planned on asking you.”

“Nonsense, I’d like it better if you could be in communication 24/7. Plus you could get a satellite TV hookup with high speed internet.”

“We don’t have that kind of money.”

“Well, you will. This coming year you’ll be just another hired hand and get the same wages as any other hired hand. I didn’t do that this year because I put in the gas tank, fuel and the meat. And, you didn’t really know what you were doing. What’s the 12.5kw run?”

“About \$9,600.”

“I can do better than that and I’ll get a tank while I’m at it. You need to get your butt in the woods and start cutting deadfalls. The standing dead trees have orange paint on them, but save them for last. I mark them around every July 1st. You work, you’ll get my help; you sit on your butt, you’re on your own.”

He got the 12.5kw for the price of the 10kw. I think he patched the fiberglass tank himself. Then, after the generator was installed, Pete came back from town with a load of electrical supplies. There was a 100 amp breaker panel, wire mold, fixtures and an instruction book. His only comment was, “Have fun.”

And, by the way, since he owned the hunting shack, he’d just keep the generator, if we ever left, he said. That was \$8,800 plus we’d never have to pay back. We continued to use the PowerBOSS because the diesel tank hadn’t been installed, plumbed or filled. The 12.5kw used slightly more fuel, from 0.1gph to 1.2gph. There are, on average, 8,766 hours per year. Times 1.2gph meant we’d need 10,600-gallons of diesel, at full load and I doubted we’d ever be running at full load. It would run more like 0.5gph or roughly 4,400 gallons per year. He said he expected us to pay the same price for the biodiesel he’d been charging his neighbors.

After the shack was wired, the tank installed and plumbed, I returned to the woods to harvest firewood. The tank wouldn’t be filled for some time. Pete decided to plant canola, and then, we’d only get whatever was left over after his shelter tanks were filled. His shelter tanks also dispensed biodiesel (B-100) from a fuel pump like you used to see in service stations when they only pumped one grade. He said we’d have to think about getting the fuel out to the new tank. He also said that the demand for the QDRV 12.5kw was so high he had trouble getting it.

The Hunting Shack – Chapter 4

One of those patriot fiction writers had been telling what a good deal they were in his stories, pricey but compact, low fuel usage, quiet and high power output. Used in an RV, the warranty was 2 years; in any other application, only a year. We got lucky, when he was finished processing the soybean oil into biodiesel, we got the rest, 2,600-gallons.

Marie began to wonder what Pete and Sarah's kids would think if they found out that Pete had all but adopted us. Their kids were in the big cities, one in Independence, one in St. Louis and the third in Jefferson City. He said he doubted they could get here in an emergency, but there were food stocks for all of them. I mentioned the cattle, hogs and chickens but left out the saddle horses. The trail rides were limited to Saturdays and Sundays only. There were 27 horses that rented for \$10 per hour plus, for that authentic feel, you could also rent a carbine and a single action revolver with western holster rig at \$5 each. For \$20 you could be Wyatt Earp, for an hour.

The weapons were loaded with blanks and the only firm rule was that you couldn't shoot from horseback. A few diehards brought their own weapons to shoot on the range near the end of the trail using live ammunition. On a busy weekend, he could pull in \$3,000.

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I cut and removed all of the deadfalls, using Pete's saws and splitter adding it to our woodpile, with the exception of the cord Pete charged me to use the saw and splitter. I bought the gas and oil for the chainsaws and any parts needing to be replaced. We'd still had expenses, but not much more than before, plus we had prime power.

This year, 2012, saw little change in the US. The stimulus package wasn't working yet, although the president kept saying it was working. That must explain why gold is hovering at \$1,600 per ounce. Rather than run the QDRV, we stuck with the PowerBOSS despite having some stabilized fuel in the tank. I don't know if biodiesel needs to be stabilized, but it sure needs an anti-gel due to its tendency to gel.

"Is that enough wood for now?"

"The pile looks bigger than when we moved down here last year."

"Then, it must be, right? Actually it's about 1½ times as much wood. I won't be able to do any wood cutting in the summer and I hope Pete teaches me to use his biodiesel equipment. He called it a mini-refinery capable of producing a maximum of 600 gallons per day. I thought it strange that he would buy a machine large enough to produce all of the biodiesel in 7 days. He said when he changes over, the time will increase to 2½ weeks and if push comes to shove, his capacity would be almost 220,000 gallons a year. I not sure about that, his farm isn't big enough to produce that much canola."

“Can we start running the diesel generator in the evenings? I miss TV.”

“Ok and we can power the refrigerator and freezer during the same time which will eliminate one use of the gasoline generator. You can use Sarah’s phone to get a dish installed and price the high speed internet.”

Marie selected the Choice plan which included most of our favorite channels. She didn’t agree to anything or get the internet until we could talk it over with Pete and Sarah. There was something about a phone line that she didn’t understand and we had no cell phone reception here, forcing us to drop the service. In the end, we ended up without satellite TV.

According to Survival Unlimited and other sources, biodiesel required a stabilizer to prevent it from becoming acidic and gelling. “North American biodiesel producers who market fuels to Europe and other international destinations have a powerful new additive to help them meet critical fuel stability standards and assure product freshness and performance long after shipping.” SU recommended PRI-D and PRI-G products. Their website said: “5 Gallon can, or 55 Gallon drum are available upon Request.” The six gallons deal from Battery Stuff was a case of 6 one-gallon cans.

Pete’s farm was 480 acres, 3 quarter sections, and he had his eye on the other quarter section if it ever came on the market. Pete and Sarah had a good operation; he was old school and used a combination of crop rotation and manure to keep the fields fertile. He avoided the high costs associated with chemicals and fertilizers. About as far as he went was testing his soil and occasionally adding lime if the soil became too acidic. They had 300 acres under tillage, the third quarter section was wooded and the source of our firewood. The fourth quarter section he wanted was also under tillage and would increase their farmland to 460 acres. Even so, 460 acres, if all planted in canola, would only produce around 58,000-gallons of biodiesel.

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We started in early April with me disking and Pete taking care of the livestock and organizing the forthcoming planting. The 40 acres of alfalfa were permanent as was the 20 acre pasture. The other 3 fields had been rotated between oats, corn and soybeans, 80 acres of each. Canola would replace the soybeans, but otherwise it was the same as every previous year. When all 240 acres were disked, I switched from the disk to the drag, leveling the fields for planting. And, by the time I was done, it was time to plant.

Sarah and Marie wanted a slightly larger garden spot to plant a few additional crops and Pete attended to their needs. Meanwhile, I finished planting and was looking forward to some off time tending to the livestock. It wasn’t to be, we mounted the cultivator and I was sent out for the first of 2 passes through the canola and corn. And, because Marie was in the garden or at Sarah’s and I was in the field, we continued to use the Power-BOSS instead of the QDRV 12.5.

Next, we cut, windrowed and baled the first cutting of alfalfa. Then, I returned to the fields for the second pass with the cultivator. We had a brief period of off time and did the second cutting of alfalfa. Marie and I worked weekends, too. Tending to the horses while Pete led the trail rides.

“I sure wish I had my welding job back, this farm work is going to be my death.”

“Hard work never killed anyone, Don, suck it up.”

“I don’t have anything left to suck up Pete.”

“Good, farming agrees with you.”

“I was never cut out to be a farmer. On the other hand, thanks to your tutelage, it appears that I can do what it takes. Has it always been this hard?”

“Worse, your great grandfather farmed a quarter section using draft horses.”

“How big was the farm then?”

“A half section, including the quarter section of woods.”

“Did he do it by himself?”

“Not hardly. Back in those days, they had large families. The kids provided a source of labor, plus the infant mortality rate was high. The oldest son usually ended up with the family farm.”

“Did you inherit the farm?”

“Your grandfather sold it to me, at market value, but carried the paper himself. I didn’t change much, the coal furnace in the house was, and is, still good. I burn stoker coal in the furnace and wood in the fireplace when it suits us. The REA put in electricity in the 50’s and dad had the house wired. Eventually, he even put in indoor plumbing. We kept the kerosene lamps for emergencies. Don’t suppose we have to worry about that now with the backup generator and the ability to produce our own diesel.”

“I was also wondering if there would be any advantage to working ourselves up to Extra class.”

“More bandwidth, mostly. The all band radio you’re using covers nearly all of the bands. Plus you have the CB to stay in touch with the house. These days, you study the canned exams, learn to use a pocket calculator and you can take the Advanced and Extra on the same day. If you’re an Extra, your call sign says so by its length and nobody bothers you.”

Pete paid on the first of the month after he'd counted up your hours for the previous month. Marie and I'd make a trip to town for staples, spices and paper products. With a regular wage, we could buy extra and store them in Pete and Sarah's shelter. If we ran low during the winter, one of us could go pull out anything needed. We were rapidly approaching our second anniversary on the farm. Pete had taught me the how to of extracting the oil, the chemicals involved in converting it and we filled his tanks and began on ours. I'd add the 2 quarts of PRI-D followed by the biodiesel.

Transport had been arranged, a 1,000 gallon tank on a trailer; pump it full, empty it by gravity. When we ended, his tanks as well as ours were full and the trailer tank held about 300 gallons of unsold fuel, to which I added 19 ounces of the additive. We both got a deer and Pete sent them to the locker plant to be cut and wrapped. I then started in on the firewood, realizing that it had been warmer and we'd used less. Determined to clear the standing dead trees, I worked well into the winter, stacking them near the hunting shack.

Pete towed over the splitter and we split two pickup loads for him and I started splitting and stacking, with Marie's help. She had to knock off for meals and I finished stacking what she was behind before washing up and eating. Speaking of washing, we'd installed a 40 gallon electric hot water heater after the generator was online and moved the washer and dryer from the machine shed. The shack was cozy, but cramped would be more accurate.

"Have you measured the firewood pile?"

"I haven't, but it wouldn't be hard. It's stacked 6 16" layers deep and 6' high. We could measure the length in feet, divide by 8 and then multiply 3."

"Got a long tape?"

"Twenty-five foot."

"Get my 100' tape from the glove box of the pickup; let's see how much you have."

Added to the 12 left over from last year we had 48 cords, an average 5 years supply. Pete also had an unlicensed still, a small one that he used to produce one batch of alcohol per year. The ethanol was stored in one used bourbon cask and stored for 8-12 years. He ordered plain bottles and lids every year to bottle the stuff, but hadn't bottled the first batch yet. He said that he decided to bottle it full strength, approximately 125 proof in the one liter bottles. Made of 75% corn, and a 25% mixture of wheat and malted barley, the taste he gave me was breath taking, but smooth.

The longer we stayed on the farm, the more Marie and I learned about Pete and Sarah. Their pepper mindset wasn't confined to Pete. Sarah had an amateur Advanced class license. Her primary responsibility was maintaining the food stores, enough for one year of every member of their extended family. When he finally began paying wages, we be-

gan setting aside ammo money to replace what we'd shot up, a few 25-round boxes of shotgun shells, more Lawman in 9mm and .45 plus Black Hills 165gr SP and 168gr HP. It was running about \$1.25 a round.

For Christmas 2012, we were presented with 1892 Winchester rifles and Used Ruger Vaquero revolvers, both in .45 Colt and 500 rounds of full power .45 Colt ammo. Pete explained that the idea behind the gift was that the following summer Marie and I'd lead the trail rides and he would tend to the horses. In addition to the firearms, he mentioned adding a few cases of 405gr round nose lead (RNL) for the Winchester 1886 .45-70 government rifles and 250gr lead RNL for the revolvers.

They were living without a TV and we gave them our old 32" model Sony, a replacement work jacket for him and a sweater for her. It was a small Butterball with the usual accoutrements for Christmas Dinner.

"I meant to tell you, your side of beef and hog are ready for pickup at the locker plant. I didn't pick it up because I didn't know how much freezer space you had."

"Do you want me to cut the three remaining dead standing trees?"

"Save them for next year. It's a shame you don't have TV, did you hear about North Korea?"

"I don't think so, what happened?"

"Do you remember that so called satellite launch in 2009?"

"That failed didn't it?"

"Yes, but they're going to try again. The more things change, the more they stay the same. Iran has successfully tested 3 medium range missiles plus one long range missile and I expect the Israelis to attack anytime. If the North Korean missile reaches Alaska, warhead or not, I think they're in for a big surprise."

"Nukes?"

"Nah, JDAMs, either 80 500-pounds or 16 2,000-pounds, times 20 planes. I figure they'll use the 2,000-pound bombs and hit 320 targets, essentially all of North Korea."

"Limited strikes on targets with appreciable military value?"

The Hunting Shack – Chapter 5

“Yes. Plus, if they need a few more delivery aircraft, they can follow a first strike with a second strike of F/A-18 Super Hornets.”

“Is there any secret to this survival business?”

“The answer is yes and no. It starts with developing the proper mindset. Next comes the spending part, acquiring what you can within your budget limits. The rule of threes is a guide: air, shelter, water and food. Shelter covers protection against fallout so we come to item five, defense. I believe in a rifle, shotgun, pistol and plenty of ammo for all. Think Hank Williams Jr., *A Country Boy Can Survive*. Item six, one remote reading survey meter is practically a must, we have two. A high range portable survey meter plus a low range meter or Geiger counter is recommended. Gas masks with CBRN filters are also a must along with a radiation suit, boots and gloves.”

Unknown to the world at large, the previous North Korean test had been determined to be a missile test and had the missile not failed, the US and others were prepared to shoot it down. Preparations were again underway to shoot down this new missile, if necessary. Boost phase intercept would be made using SM-3. Interception near Alaska would use THAAD missiles. The third missile in the group was the Ground-Based Mid-course Defense missile and the fourth the Patriot 3. The airborne laser was still in the test stage with funding having been pulled back. The usual threats had been issued by North Korea concerning its missile launch and the annual war games between the US and South Korea.

The Iranians had multiple successful launches of their 1,400km Shahab-3 and one successful launch of the 2,000km Shahab-4. Both India and Pakistan had operable IRBMs. Israel had tested its Jericho III missile on 17Jan08 and it was now in service. The estimated range was 4,800 to 11,500km. It is possible for the missile to be equipped with a single 750 kg nuclear warhead or two or three low yield MIRV warheads. Uncle Pete had been checking.

Just because the various countries had missiles didn't mean that they had to use them, but there was always the temptation. That didn't take into account the personalities of the leaders of the various countries. Bibi, Binyamin Netanyahu, was a hardliner and had formed a coalition government after the 2009 election, but had problems within his own party, the Likud, from Silvan Shalom. Vladimir Putin, the so called Prime Minister of Russia, was the man in charge, regardless of his title. Our president was trying his best to turn the economy around using the same tactics that FDR used without success. A gifted speaker, his words weren't changing what was happening.

If for no other reason, the Democratic Party lost its majority in both houses of Congress in the November 2, 2010 elections. Not by much, though, creating a cantankerous, do nothing, Congress. It was different in the November 6, 2012 elections. Obama was reelected but the other party took total control of Congress. He'd had his 4 years to save

the country and failed, so I voted for the other guy. The liberals loved the guy, though, and he won. I think Hillary was biding her time until 2016.

History told us that no one man, even with the support of Congress, can resolve a severe economic crisis unless he is willing to cut taxes and spend money on hard goods, like F-22s, F-35s and (nuclear powered) Destroyers and Cruisers. We may not need them now, but they take time to build and odds favor the prepared country. Better use nuclear power on the auxiliaries too, so they can keep up. How about some frigates? Ours are getting old. (The fastest battleship during WW II – Iowa class)

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Unless I have my facts wrong, the fastest surface ships are the Aircraft Carrier, Cruiser and Destroyer. None of the ships can maintain either flank or full speed for very long. They typically sail at standard speed to keep the ships from falling apart or breaking down. Lacking a definition of standard speed, I assumed it had something to do with hull speed. My Division in the Army didn't use many ships, but we did ride on them, sometimes. An Aircraft Carrier had to maintain 30 knots when launching and recovering aircraft, but I wondered if they did that all of the time. I concluded probably not, 30 knots would wear out the Cruisers and Destroyers.

If I had a portable welder mounted in the box of my pickup, the model with the built in generator, I might have picked additional work in the fall when harvesting ended. Most of the models available were Lincoln or Miller. Lincoln had a combination Mig, Tig and ark welder, only 20 grand. Your helmet and chipper were extra. Just a dream, though one of many.

After two seasons of farming I was getting the knack and the weekend trail rides were not only fun, but educational. The only loaded weapons, I learned, were those carried by the trail guides. Those who brought their own kept them unloaded until we reached the range at trails end. The explanation was, there were critters out there. I switched the .45 caliber carbine for the 1886 Winchester. The only critters either of us saw the whole summer were a few deer.

I don't know how they did it, working 7 days a week. One thing was obvious, with this schedule; they didn't have time for church during the summer months. On the other hand, those trail rides were a real money machine. Six months of 7 days a week followed by six months of 5 days a week. Pete was a real bargain hunter too. Whenever he heard about something that could be used on the farm, he'd buy it for cash, provided he could get the right price. That was the case when he heard of another 10,000-gallon fuel tank. He bought it as is and after trail ride season ended, proceeded to find and patch the leaks before burying it along with his other two tanks.

That turned out to be one of his better ideas because with the canola and our limited generator load, some of the biodiesel was treated and stored in the new tank after topping off his other two tanks and our tank. Our usage, on average, was 0.61gph, 5,347

gallons per year. His source for filters and oil was the same source for the generator he bought for the shack and the price he paid was above wholesale but well below retail.

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The missile launched by North Korea either failed to reach orbit or was intended to strike Alaska. Either way, THAAD worked. It was on all the news outlets and North Korea's protestations over the US action weren't far behind. We were being criticized by Iran, Venezuela, China, and to a lesser degree Russia. OPEC called an emergency meeting and agreed to cut production by $\frac{1}{3}$. Fox News reported that several countries had moved their military forces to an increased state of alert/readiness. MSNBC almost slipped and criticized the president. Almost. Their spin masters eventually came up with the expression abundance of caution.

To put the event in perspective, the launch had been planned for spring. Problems delayed the attempt again and again, resulting in a late October launch. I can't remember; either 23rd or 24th of October, 2013. The 24th in Korea would have been the 23rd here, if I recall correctly. On the 26th of October, North Korean forces poured across the DMZ. We sent the George Washington to support South Korea and ordered the remaining Carrier Strike Groups to the Far East, Pearl Harbor or Yokosuka.

Our Strike Groups included our Amphibious Assault Ships; we were bringing in the Marines. The difference between a Battle Group and a Strike Group was the Amphibious ships and it was more proper to call the Strike Groups, Battle Groups. Troops and equipment were hastily pulled from Afghanistan and redeployed to South Korea. Two ships loaded with M1A3 Abrams tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles were dispatched from San Diego. A third ship carried artillery and munitions. A container ship was loaded with an assortment of additional munitions, equipment, MREs and tray packs plus cold weather gear.

The North Korean advance was halted just north of Seoul. The North had developed a new mine clearing device, sending civilians first. Most, if not all, US M14 and M16 mines had been deployed to the Korean Peninsula with most of them planted just south of the DMZ. Unless North Korea had weapons we knew nothing about, they didn't really worry us. You see:

*The preacher man says it's the end of time
And the Mississippi River she's a goin' dry
The interest is up and the Stock Markets down
And you only get mugged
If you go down town*

*I live back in the woods, you see
A woman and the kids, and the dogs and me
I got a shotgun rifle and a 4-wheel drive
And a country boy can survive*

Country folks can survive

*I can plow a field all day long
I can catch catfish from dusk till dawn
We make our own whiskey and our own smoke too
Ain't too many things these ole boys can't do
We grow good ole tomatoes and homemade wine
And a country boy can survive
Country folks can survive*

*Because you can't starve us out
And you can't makes us run
Cause one-of- 'em old boys raisin ole shotgun
And we say grace and we say Ma'am
And if you ain't into that we don't give a damn*

*We came from the West Virginia coalmines
And the Rocky Mountains and the and the western skies
And we can skin a buck; we can run a trot-line
And a country boy can survive
Country folks can survive*

*I had a good friend in New York City
He never called me by my name, just hillbilly
My grandpa taught me how to live off the land
And his taught him to be a businessman
He used to send me pictures of the Broadway nights
And I'd send him some homemade wine*

*But he was killed by a man with a switchblade knife
For 43 dollars my friend lost his life
I'd love to spit some beechnut in that dudes eyes
And shoot him with my old 45
Cause a country boy can survive
Country folks can survive*

*Cause you can't starve us out and you can't make us run
Cause one-of- 'em old boys raisin ole shotgun
And we say grace and we say Ma'am
And if you ain't into that we don't give a damn*

*We're from North California and south Alabam
And little towns all around this land
And we can skin a buck; we can run a trot-line
And a country boy can survive*

Country folks can survive
© 1981, Hank Williams Jr.

I misunderstood the lyrics and thought he said 'we could make our own soap'. Thus began the great lye soap experiment. We used beef tallow and wood ashes. The tallow was rendered to remove the pure fat. We then produced the soap by the 'hot method', boiling the mixture until we couldn't taste the lye anymore. I was the official taste tester. When it was done, we poured it into molds. The product wasn't Irish Spring, but after it had totally cooled 4 days later, we had our lye soap. Nasty stuff, but it cleaned really well.

In comparison to the song, we could make our own fuel, our own whiskey, our own lye soap, grow tomatoes, skin a buck and probably make wine. We wanted for little, the country life was very agreeable. Pete helped and we cut, split and stacked 50 cords of firewood, 25 cords each for both the house and the hunting shack.

On the other side of the Pacific, the Marines dropped in to lend the Army a hand and the Army was being assembled in Japan and flown to a base somewhere in South Korea, film at 11. The Republic of China (Taiwan) agreed to lend the Americans over 150,000 type 57 rifles (M14s made on the original American machinery). In the jungles of Vietnam, the rifle was too heavy and too long; in Korea, it was the right weapon at the right time for the right place.

The Korean War lasted from 1951 to present; the interim period had been an extended cease fire. The renewed hostilities came just when most of us thought surplus Lake City 5.56 and 7.62 would start to fill the shelves in the stores. I was ok; I had 4,500-rounds 168gr BTHP Black Hills and 500-rounds of 165gr BTSP 7.62x51mm. Marie had 5,000-rounds of BTSP 5.56x45mm 60gr SP, also Black Hills. We used GDHP in our pistols and Lawman for practice with one exception, .45 Colt only came in GDHP. Pete bought lead RN, we bought 250gr GDHP. I also had some Radway Green and Prvi Partizan.

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As the revived war played out on the Korean Peninsula, the entire world remained on the edge of their seats. The question Pete raised was, "Will China join in like it did the last time?"

"Pete, the last time was different, China didn't get nukes until 1964. They would have too much to lose if they opened that can of worms; they're an industrialized nation now."

"We'd better take time to check our supplies inventory and get anything we're short of. We can get any grains we need at the elevator and I'll just get next year's seed laid in early. I'll get 2 drums each of PRI-D plus 12 gallons of PRI-G. Get Marie and ask her to help you with the inventory. If we can't get it local, we'll put in a rush order from Walton Feed, Bob's Red Mill, Honeyville Grain or Survival Enterprises. Tell Sarah."

The Hunting Shack – Chapter 6

“Do we need to go this far?”

“It’s called LTS food because it lasts, so we’ll just eat it up if we don’t need it. I’m good on ammo, how about you?”

“Oh yeah, we have plenty.”

“If it comes down to using those cowboy guns, we’re set. I got a few cases of .45-70-405 Government full power loads. After I finish up my shopping, I’m driving down to Lebanon to look up an old friend. Call me on 10 meters if something comes up. Sarah knows the frequency. I could be gone for as long as 3 days, so don’t get your shorts in a knot.”

“Who are you going to see?”

“He’s a retired Command Sergeant Major in the Army who works at Fort Leonard Wood. Worked in Logistics, among other things. Keep this to yourself and Marie, Sarah already knows.”

Command Sergeant Major...worked Logistics...still has access to the Post...I wonder where Pete’s ammo bunker is.

This could get serious, all those Chinese container ships arriving in west coast ports with containers full of Christmas toys. If China joined in, we might not have a Christmas this year. We also maintained a high volume of trade with South Korea and Japan; could the same be said for their container ships? If we run out of StarKist tuna, shipments from American Samoa are also being blocked.

But wait, there’s more. Star-Kist was originally bought up by H. J. Heinz, who later sold it to Del Monte who later sold it to Dongwon, a company from; you guessed it, South Korea. The largest plant is in American Samoa, I’m not sure about the Puerto Rico plant, but the website mentions Thailand and Ecuador. The American plant, located on Terminal Island, closed during the ‘80s because of California’s pollution laws. Too much fish oil was getting into the harbor.

We have sure come a long ways since we made our own cars, produced our own food and extracted and refined our own petroleum products. The rice we chose to store was Jasmine, a product of Thailand. Nine out of every ten items seemed to bear the legend, ‘Made in China’.

Pete was back late on the third day, his pickup and trailer loaded down. I offered to help him unload it and he brushed me off, telling me he could handle it. He said the drums of fuel additives would be delivered on Monday.

“What’s the story on the inventory?”

“We were down on a few items and Marie gave Sarah the list.”

“Good, good. My Sergeant buddy came through big time.”

“Like I said, I’ll help you unload.”

“Ah, what the hell, it’s not like you won’t see it eventually. One item in particular is expressly for you.”

“Really? What?”

“We’re going to find out just how good of a shot you are. It’s a long range rifle with an effective range of 1,850 meters.”

“A .50 caliber rifle?”

“Long Range Sniper Rifle, Caliber .50, Mk 15 with a Nightforce NXS 12-42x56 scope and the Elite Iron suppressor. Got a night vision rail on it and a total of 10 5-round magazines. My buddy parted with a Magnum Universal Night Sight aka MUNS. Got me a Long Range Sniper Rifle, Caliber .50, M107 with a Leupold 4.5x14 Mark-IV scope. I phoned Barrett and ordered a BORS. The M107 is a 12.7x99mm Barrett M82A1M semi-automatic rifle variant. Improved variant including lengthened accessory rail. Includes rear grip and monopod socket; basically the M82A1M.”

“Have you ever priced .50 caliber ammo? It’s up around \$4.50 a round!”

“No worries, I got ammo too, 10,000 rounds total of .50 caliber.”

“What else did you get?”

“Things you know how to use, M67s and M136 AT4s. Smoke too. I wanted some 40mm grenades, but that didn’t work out.”

“Why not?”

They didn’t have any M79s and you don’t mount an M203 on an M14.”

“This must have cost you a bunch.”

“I didn’t spend one penny.”

“He surely didn’t just give it to you.”

“I paid another way.”

“How?”

“With two spaces in the shelter for him and his wife.”

“Do we need more food?”

“I called Sarah and she took care of that when she ordered the things on the list you gave her. It cost quite a bit extra, but the delivery of the food will also be on Monday. She added one thing we don't usually keep, MREs.”

“I thought they were military only.”

“The packers have companion companies that package MREs with civilian labels. Wornick produces EverSafe, Sopakco produces SurePak. She also ordered Red Feather canned butter and cheese plus Yoders canned meats.”

“Aren't you overreacting just a bit?”

“It doesn't matter does it? If North Korea does, in fact, have nuclear weapons as we're led to believe, they'll use them when we start kicking butt. I'm not sure how we'll respond. If we respond in kind, China will get into it. It also depends on where they use their weapons, South Korea or Japan.”

“Or China or Russia.”

“They won't attack China or Russia, trust me on this. Kim Il Jong may be sick, but he isn't crazy. They have demonstrated a capacity to hit anywhere in South Korea and Japan with missiles, which they already possess. The only nuclear test they did (2006) sort of fizzled, but I wouldn't count them out of the nuclear club.”

“The war in the early '50s didn't involve outsiders did it?”

“The support forces for the South included an assortment of UN troops. The North was helped by Chinese troops and Russian pilots. Truman sent the 7th Fleet to protect Taiwan from the Chinese. Check it out, it's all on Wiki.”

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American Carrier forces, using JDAMs, attacked North Korea without mercy. A JDAM is a one shot, one kill device when it comes to using bombs. Our F/A-18 Super Hornets and our F-35C fighters were far superior to anything the North could field. Even when the CIS provided the latest Russian fighters, the North was fighting a lost cause because of insufficient training. Unlike the previous conflict, there was no Soviet Union to provide pilots and the CIS declined to do so.

As predicted, North Korea used its small inventory of nuclear weapons to strike South Korea and Japan. Japan successfully intercepted all but one missile, which struck near Tokyo. American Aegis Destroyers and Cruisers intercepted 2 of the 4 aimed at South Korea and missed the same one the Japanese missed. One struck Seoul and the other Pusan. One Los Angeles class submarine, outfitted with TLAM-Ns, launched on the north. It was a 688I class, outfitted with vertical launch tubes and this one time only carried additional Tomahawks in the torpedo room. All of the Tomahawks had a yield of 150kT. The first wave of launches cleared the vertical launch tubes.

You do know that all American Aircraft Carriers have an inventory of nuclear bombs available for delivery by its aircraft, right? They're the B-61/10 designated as a Non-Strategic Bomb, e.g., a tactical nuke. The sub had been armed at Guam with the TLAM-Ns flown specifically there for a one time mission. The difference between a TLAM-N and B-61/10 was simply put, plausible deniability. The United States and Russia weren't the only countries to possess submarines capable of launching nuclear missiles. The list was long, actually, and included nearly every member of the nuclear club. A TLAM-N was a tiny target and almost impossible for most countries to track.

I was surprised when a SUV pulling a closed trailer pulled in and parked. It was driven by a man in his late 40s or early 50s and I assumed the passenger was his wife.

"Is Pete here?"

"I'll get him. Are you the Command Sergeant Major he mentioned to me?"

"I am for a fact. Name's Jonas Blane. Wife is Molly."

And yes, before you ask, he is a black man.

"Pete, Jonas Blane is here."

"Get Marie and shut down everything except your freezer. Move all the food from your refrigerator to the refrigerator in the shelter. Make sure you have all of your guns and ammo. It's time..."

"You mean..."

"Yep."

It was, to put it bluntly, GTW time. It took Marie and me about 20 minutes to get everything in the pickup and/or shutdown. While she moved everything from the pickup to the shelter, I helped Pete with the livestock; getting them into the barn with feed put down and automatic water tanks checked. Jonas was adding sandbags to the doors of the barn. I had wondered what those were for... I had seen Pete filling and stacking layers of sandbags around the barn, hog house and hen house and stacking more next to the doors. I kept forgetting to ask why he was doing that; maybe I subconsciously already

knew. You do recall that the shelter was connected to all of the buildings via culverts, don't you?

Molly Blane was removing all kinds of boxes, bundles and weapons cases from the SUV. She was wearing a military holster, probably a M12, with a Beretta. I assumed she had either a M9 or M9A1 pistol. We would find out when we were assembled in the shelter. Sarah had called their kids and all had agreed to attempt to get to the farm. This Jonas Blane didn't look like Dennis Haysbert and Molly sure didn't look like Regina Taylor. I'd say he looked like an older Richard Roundtree and she more like an older Halle Berry. Older in terms of the actor's famous *Shaft* and the actress's *Catwoman*.

I spotted what looked like another case for a M82A1M/M107 and several cases of 40mm grenades. Did he have a poodle shooter with a M203 or perhaps a Milkor M32 Multiple Grenade Launcher? Time would tell... There was a flash high in the sky, HEMP? The ground shook – a ground strike or an earthquake? We didn't enter the shelter, waiting for Pete's kids to arrive. Molly's pistol was a M9A1 loaded with 124gr +P Gold Dot. Jonas had a Kimber Tactical II, also loaded with Gold Dot, 230gr. Yes, he had a M107, plus an M21 and a standard issue M14 with synthetic stock. Her rifle was a HK-416 built by H&K. She also had a heavier M1A Loaded.

Introductions were made all around and I learned that he had never been attached to Detachment D, Delta Force, just an above average supply sergeant, or so he claimed. Molly was a housewife and had been since they'd married. Their kids were apparently grown and married, they weren't brought up.

Meanwhile, we waited until one of two things happened, the needle on the CD V-700 lifted off zero or my cousins showed up. I knew my cousins names and their husbands or wife's name, but wasn't up to date on their kids names. My cousins were older than Marie and me, but not by much. Pete was my mother's older brother and in his late 50s when we moved to the farm. Both Sarah and he were in their 60s now. They had married young and their kids came quickly.

"Are we going to the shelter or not?"

"Do what you want; I'm waiting for the kids."

"What makes you think they can get here? That HEMP probably destroyed the computers in their vehicles."

"I'm sure it did. That's why each one of them has a BOV with a non-electronic diesel, fuel tank, auxiliary fuel tank and a cross bed fuel tank holding 98 gallons of fuel. All stabilized with PRI-D. They also have a covered trailer that Sarah and I fixed up for them. Each trailer contains a one year deluxe food supply for each member of their family from Walton. They have Coleman lanterns, large dual fuel stoves, firearms, ammo and anything they might need to get here."

The Hunting Shack – Chapter 7

“I’m sorry, you never said and I just assumed...”

“You do that too often Don. You shouldn’t assume that I wouldn’t take care of my kids. I’ve taken good care of Marie and you haven’t I?”

“You sure have; I’m sorry, I guess I engaged my mouth before turning on my brain.”

“And now you have *Snake Doctor* to take care of you.”

“*Snake Doctor* is Dennis Haysbert. Jonas doesn’t look anything like him. Tell him Jonas.”

“It was a handle I picked up after the fact. *The Unit* came out in 2006, just before I retired. Since a Command Sergeant Major and a Sergeant Major are both E-9s, some of my people jokingly began calling me *Snake Doctor*. It sort of stuck and I’ve gone by it ever since, even as a GS-12. I’ve never taken sniper training, so past 1,500 meters, you’d probably be safe from me.”

“We just got that stuff last week; I haven’t even unpacked the rifle. Pete said we got ammo, what kind?”

“Let me preface my reply by saying that they both shoot to the same point of aim. One is the M1022, practice ammo which is ballistically matched to the other ammo, the Mk211MP.”

“Raufoss?”

“You know it?”

“Never shot it, but I saw snipers using it in Iraq.”

“Iraqi Freedom?”

“You bet, I was a designated Marksman and used the M21.”

“You didn’t get the newer rifle? It’s the M110 SASS and available with or without suppressor.”

“I got out in 2006.”

“They didn’t release them for combat until 2007. What do you have?”

“M1A Loaded shooting nothing but Black Hills. Either it’s especially accurate or I got lucky. The barrel is the same barrel used on the National Match.”

“Iraqi Freedom, huh? Then you’re familiar with all of the toys I sent up with Pete.”

“Yes, used them all. Sure wish we had some of those old LAW rockets.”

“Why?”

“Lighter, more compact and enough for any civilian vehicle we might need to use one on.”

“Then you’re in luck, care to help me unload my trailer?”

“I’ll be glad to help, is there anything that might interest me?”

“One thing for sure. Can’t say about the others.”

The last four crates, up against front wall of the trailer were LAWs crates, 15 per crate. Before we got to those, we unloaded M183 Demolition kits and before them, obsolete M-61 hand grenades, Mk3A2 Concussion and AN M14 TH3 Thermate and several cases of white smoke (Willy Pete) used for smoke screens. Closest to the door were M18A1 Claymore mines. I began to wonder what was in the SUV that I hadn’t noticed.

The first ones to show up were Pat and Sally from Jefferson City, followed within 30 minutes by Janice and Mel from Independence. Tail end Charlie’s were Teresa and Matt from St. Louis. I counted noses and came up with 8 children of various ages from teens down to 10 year olds.

The pickups were backed into the machine shed one at a time and the trailers detached. The pickup was then moved to a different area of the machine shed and the next trailer and pickup repeated the same progress. When we had finished unloading Sarge’s trailer, it was parked outside and the SUV added to the machine shed. After the contents had been moved to the shelter and stacked, Pete said it was time to go to ground.

It would appear that Marie and I might end up sleeping on the floor. Pete had a different idea, hot racking. Marie and I were assigned one bunk and advised to share. The only things Pete’s kids removed from their pickups and trailers were food from refrigerators plus firearms and ammo.

Over the course of the next few hours, we felt a lot more earthquakes, e.g., seismic disruptions. Pete had his log out and every earthquake was being noted, primarily the time and apparent intensity. He wasn’t set up to be able to tell the direction the quake came from. It is generally done using multiple seismometers, of which we had none. Were it not for the HEMP, we may have thought it was another quake on the New Madrid Fault Zone. Which is not to say it wasn’t; all of the radio and TV stations went off the air when the HEMP hit.

“Radiation reading?”

“Nada.”

“Don, grab the CD V-700, your weapons and let’s go topside to take a look.”

The CD V-700 is a Geiger counter with maximum range of 50mR. It was reading normal background radiation, nearly zero.

“Did you lock up your shack?”

“Didn’t have a padlock.”

“I’ll get you a matched pair and you can lock up front and back. I’m going to check out the house one more time and then we can return to the shelter. We’ll use the culverts to get to the hog house, hen house and barn. Better get whatever milk and eggs are available, we have a lot of mouths to feed.”

We could have accessed the buildings from above ground, but that meant un-piling the sandbags and replacing them when we finished. Using the culverts and clothesline rope was much easier. On my way to the shack, I had a thought. *Would one bathroom be enough for twenty people?*

During boot camp, our barracks had one bathroom with six sinks, six stools and one large shower room. The barracks held 65 men so we’d be short by nearly 50%, but could probably manage. Anyone who couldn’t hold it could ride the creeper to the barn and use the toilet there. A toilet in a barn; go figure.

What milk exceeded our ability to consume would be curdled using Rennet for cottage cheese, or further processed for Colby or Jack, the easiest cheeses to make. We were allowed all of the eggs we wanted for breakfast and any left after they were six days old were boiled and added to one of two gallon jars holding pickled eggs, something Pete recovered from local taverns.

In addition to the cask of homemade bourbon, there were several cases of Michelob, a Missouri product. It was rationed lest someone drink too much and having a fight break out. The layers of sandbags produced a protection factor of roughly 900 since it was 32” thick. The protection of 1000 would come from 36” of soil, according to Wiki.

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Clarification!

The values shown on Wiki are taken from The Compass DeRose Guide to Emergency Preparedness - Hardened Shelters. derose.net/steve/guides/emergency/hardened.html

A more conservative set of values is found in an Excel spreadsheet from Alpha-Rubicon titled *radprocalcent.xls*. If you search using that name of the spreadsheet, you can bring it up. Be sure to click the box to permit editing so you can add values. This is copyrighted material so don't share it with others.

DeRose says 3.6" of earth = one halving thickness while the other says 5.5" and the source of that information is Sharon Packer of Utah Shelter Systems, a Nuclear Engineer.

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Twelve hours after we went into lockdown, the radiation level remained the same, background level. We began to wonder, without voicing our concern, if the attack had been limited to the HEMP, or if it included multiple missiles striking multiple locations. Had Kansas City been hit, we would have had fallout by now.

"I'm going to suit up and go check the probes for the meters," Pete announced. "The rest of you stay here and wait until I get back."

They had a war and no one came? The attack was limited to one or more HEMP devices? For sure, 3 HEMP devices, atomic bombs, not hydrogen bombs, would take out nearly 100% of the power, phones and anything connected to long wires. Had someone taken out the core of our infrastructure and then sat back to determine the effect before proceeding further?

The power cables from our generator to the fuse panel were protected by metal conduit and all of the wires coming out of the fuse panel were either in conduit or metal wire mold. Our freezer was nearly full after we added the beef, pork, bass fillets, chickens and venison; would it thaw? It was the longest 10 minutes in my life before Pete returned.

"I don't know what to think. The radiation level is normal. I'd guess it's safe enough for the time being to leave the shelter. Everyone come out armed, just in case."

Marie and I got in the pickup and drove back to the shack to check on the genset and freezer. The genset was humming along almost like it had no load. I checked the freezer and it was 0°. That caused the genset to kick in and we both realized that, for the moment, everything at the hunting shack was fine. We locked the shack back up and returned to Pete and Sarah's. While the house was a large two story with multiple bedrooms, it didn't appear to me that it could hold everyone who had come to the farm.

"Don, why don't you saddle up two horses for *Snake Doctor* and you and ride the fence lines?"

"Do you ride *Doc*?"

“Like I was born in a saddle.”

“Do you have any cowboy guns?”

“Everything I need.”

I saddled two 5 year old geldings, gentle horses. Maybe *Doc* had been born in a saddle, but I doubt he'd seen one in 30 years, give or take. On the other hand, he soon tuned into the horse or the horse him. With the CD V-700 hanging by a loop of twine from my saddle horn, we set off, for no reason other than Pete had suggested it. You realize that to get the horses out of the barn, I had to remove the pile of sandbags from the door, don't you?

Snake Doctor was amazing in one respect; he dressed the part, wearing Wrangler jeans, Tony Lama boots, a leather vest, a blue work shirt and a wide brimmed Resistol Double Eagle hat in natural color. He had his own gun belt with 24 loops for .45 Colt cartridges and 10 loops for .45-70-405 cartridges. He had a pack of smokes, kitchen matches and two stogies sticking out of his shirt pocket. Where did this guy come from, cattle country? He added more ammo to the saddlebags and slung one of those old fashioned, round blanket covered 2 quart canteens from his saddle horn. I did a double take at that, I'd always wanted one for camping and was compelled to ask about the canteen.

“I got that from Don Gleason's Camping Supply. It's a two quart Oasis, but he also carries a four quart Oasis. They're made by EZ Sales & Manufacturing, Inc. and the description is Western Round Canteens.”

“So, what do you think about this turn of events? A HEMP with no follow-up attack.”

“It's hard to say. My insides sources indicated that China was going to launch on us. I'm fairly sure that the HEMP took out some of our satellites. NORAD can track any launch from anywhere in the world, so it's safe to say that they know who is responsible. The president will probably want to negotiate with them.”

“I just don't get it.”

“Did you ever read David Crawford's *Lights Out*? The situation was similar to the one we find ourselves in now. He never identified the source of the HEMP by name but in a speech, the Vice President said we weren't attacked by nuclear weapons. For those people who had a means to generate electricity, things were bad, but not awfully bad. Others came to depend on them.”

“Was that the karate man story?”

“You've read it?”

“I have, but don’t really remember it. I looked at it as more like entertainment than survival training.”

“Where were you based when you were in Iraq?”

“It was in Diyala Province at a forward operating base.”

“When did you separate?”

“About 9 months after I returned.”

“So you still had time on your enlistment?”

The Hunting Shack – Chapter 8

“In the past tense yes, four years of wondering if I’d get called back up.”

“I assume that you would have gone.”

“I would, but I wouldn’t have been happy about it.”

“Why?”

“It’s a hot as an oven most of the year. You’re wearing about 80 pounds of gear and are so loaded down you can barely move. They need to come up with some kind of body armor that isn’t as heavy. Plus, I carried eleven 20-round magazines of M118LR ammo and that’s heavy. I was just glad when my time was up.”

“Looks like a cut fence.”

“It does, doesn’t it? I’ll have to go get a spool of barbed wire and fasteners to make the repair.”

“I’ll stay here and keep an eye out.”

“Give me about 30 minutes.”

To do it right, I needed something to pull the T posts together and something else to stretch the wire tight. Pete gave me a lightweight block and tackle plus a ratchet binder for the barbed wire. I was 5 minutes late getting back, but nothing was amiss. Using the block and tackle, we pulled the posts as tight as we could, attached the bottom wire and stretched it tight with the ratchet binder. Twice more and the repair was complete. Sarge took the bag holding the block and tackle and I took the bag holding the spool of barbed wire and binder.

We continued along the fence until we had made a full circuit. It wasn’t much of a ride, about 3½ miles. Sarge said he wouldn’t mind another circuit, so we dropped off the equipment and made another 3½ mile ride. For what it’s worth, he was actually riding like he had been born in a saddle. We were about half done with the circuit when the radio squawked.

“Don, got your ears on?”

“Copy, Pete.”

“Come back to the house. The EAS radio stations are back on the air and the president will be making an announcement in about 15 minutes.”

We set off at a trot and made it in about 5 minutes.

“What did the announcer say?”

“Just that the Emergency Alert System was active and the White House was going to make an announcement in about...8 minutes.”

Ladies and Gentlemen, the president.

Yesterday, Sunday, October 6th, 2013, a date which will live in infamy – [the] United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by missile forces of the People’s Republic of China.

The United States was at peace with that nation, and, at the solicitation of China, was still in conversation with its Government and looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific.

It will be recorded that the targeting of the attack makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days, weeks or years ago. During the intervening time the Chinese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.

As Commander-in-Chief of the military, I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense.

But always will our whole nation remember the character of the onslaught against us. No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.

I believe that I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us.

Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory and our interests are in grave danger.

With confidence in our armed forces – with the unbounding determination of our people – we will gain the inevitable triumph – so help us God.

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by China on Sunday, October 6th, 2013, a state of war has existed between the United States and the People’s Republic of China.

“I’ve heard that speech before.”

“Most everyone in the US has, that’s FDR’s Infamy speech to Congress. Maybe they just dusted it off, changed the words to fit and he got on the radio.”

“I take it that we’re at war with China.”

“That’s what the man said,” *Snake Doctor* mused. “Now, I have a question. He didn’t use the word retaliate. How does one characterize all measures?”

“Maybe it means that we will respond in kind, warhead for warhead.”

“Apparently nothing was hit, or he would have said so. Does that mean we use 3 HEMP devices on a country whose infrastructure would barely be touched?”

“Could they be planning an invasion? I’ve read many stories when China attacked the US via Mexico.”

So many questions... so few answers. It occurred to me that one squirrel I knew of had a standard answer for situations like this, *Lock and load*. If he were still alive, he probably still lived in Palmdale. A US map was spread out on the dining room table and *Snake Doctor* tapped his finger on the map.

“Right here, Juárez, across from El Paso. It isn’t ideal, it’s right across the border from Fort Bliss. But, it is the closest point to the interior of the country.”

“So you think there will be an invasion?”

“I didn’t say that. I was pointing out one route an invading Army might take. Fort Bliss maintained and trained several US Patriot Missile Batteries. Between 2008 and 2011, elements of the US 1st Armored Division arrived at Fort Bliss and replaced Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Brigades that moved to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, transforming Fort Bliss to a Heavy Armor Training post.”

“I like it.”

“Why?”

“You said heavy armor, so that means M1A3 Abrams and Bradley IFVs. Since they finally upgraded the Abrams, They go faster, have a greater operating range and have that new German gun, the L55.”

“I don’t know about the rest of you, but I sure would like to know what’s happening in Korea. If the North nuked Seoul and Pusan, are we pulling out? And like the rest of you, I’d like to know what our response to China was.”

“Well Pete, it’s about 900 miles, give or take, from El Paso to Camdenon. They’d be tied up for who knows how long at Fort Bliss and might never get out of our southern border states. You can secure everything except the livestock, right?”

“Right, Jonas.”

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We later learned that China had 3 satellites in orbit thought to be either GPS or spy satellites. They were neither; rather each contained an atomic warhead. Apparently some enterprising Chinese read Wiki and learned that an atomic bomb produced a greater EMP than a hydrogen bomb. We knew who launched them and had tracked them for 2-3 years without realizing what they could do to us. Narrowly construing JFKs warning to the Soviet Union during the Cuban Missile Crisis would lead one to believe that the policy was an eye for an eye; if they wiped us out, we'd wipe them out. Otherwise our response should be limited to what they'd done to us.

When nukes started flying in Korea, everyone not Korean pulled out. There were too many surviving South Koreans for anyone to offer them a home.

◦

“Don, how hard would it be to build a shelter for the livestock?”

“Uncle Pete, it would need to be as big as the barn, hog house and hen house combined. We need some way to store their feed, either above them in a loft or below them in a basement. How big is the barn?”

“Sixty wide by one hundred long.”

“You'd need a hole larger than that so you could get the animals up and down, probably a ramp on the long side. Put the feed on the lower level to minimize the grade to 10%.”

“How about the grade down to the lower level?”

“Keep the 10% grade and wrap it around the corner. Know anyone with a large dragline or something that can move that much dirt in a short time?”

“A dragline would be perfect and yes, I think I know where I can hire one. Why didn't I think of that?”

Pete left like a bat out of hell, returning 2 hours later, grinning.

“I lined up the dragline, and someone to frame the building. He's even willing to change our culverts to give us access to the building. With what's happening he had no idea where he could get more work for his crews. It'll be a turnkey project with delivery in 21 days. Hell, I won't even need a bank loan to pay for it, just delivery of 10,000-gallons of biodiesel and the discounted cost of the materials. We have the biodiesel already and I have enough cash in my safe to pay for the materials.”

“What, you don’t trust banks?”

“Do you?”

“It wasn’t their fault I lost my job. But, now that you mention it, we’ve operated on a cash basis since coming here.”

“No gold or silver?” Jonas asked.

“Not us, but I wouldn’t be surprised if Pete had some.”

“I have a rough idea how much he has. Even Molly and I have a little, some junk silver and a few Krugerrands.”

“Why Krugerrands and not American Eagles?”

“Smaller premium for the same coin. Both are 22 carat, but the Eagles command a higher premium. South Africa makes some fractional ounce Krugerrands, too.”

Pete had apparently decided on his way to town to make the new underground barn larger, 100x120 to allow room for the hogs and chickens. I’d seen or read about nearly everything except an underground barn. The basic idea was that, should we be invaded, the livestock could be hidden in an underground barn just as we could be hidden in an underground shelter.

The drag line approached the excavation from all sides, piling the soil high for subsequent reuse. The concrete floor was formed and poured while carpenters assembled the barn in modules that could and would be joined together. The concrete contained some kind of an additive forcing it to cure faster than normal. The lower level was assembled and the hay and grain added. The floor for the upper level and its walls, stanchions and the milking equipment were added and/or connected.

Finally, a heavy roof was built and covered by multiple layers of OSB cemented together and nailed, tarpapered and sealed. The ramps down to the first and second level were graded, the same fast setting concrete used and they were likewise covered over, even before the concrete was totally set. A tanker pulled in and 10,000-gallons of bio-diesel was pumped; Pete handed that construction supervisor a wad of cash and we set back to wait for the concrete to set before our first test run. Would the animals descend the grade to the lower levels?

The Hunting Shack – Chapter 9

The ramps fell 12 feet in 120 feet, a grade of 10%. One room on the lower level was set aside in the lower level for the biodiesel equipment and the still with good ventilation. The first few ups and downs required the use of cattle prods; the animals didn't like the slope. Actually, none of us liked the slope and the best way to get to and from the barn was via the relocated culverts. Both the lower level and upper level had eight foot ceilings and the barn had six feet of earth cover, not counting the two feet of raised earth. Not only was the radiation protection factor high, the barn could be concealed, hiding the livestock.

The heavily compacted soil covering the underground barn was expected to settle slightly and the contractor allowed for that. Eventually, the location would be nearly flat and even now could be used for its original purpose, a garden. Rather than extending the ramp above ground, there was an open hole that could be covered. That wasn't part of the turnkey project, however. We built our own cover putting everyone to work.

"Have there been any more announcements?"

"Marie said she hasn't heard any. It would take the Chinese some time to move their troops and equipment from Pacific ports to the American border. They couldn't have done it before the HEMP because our satellites would have seen them."

"I can't dispute the logic of that, but something just isn't right. It's been about 3 weeks since the attack, which should be more than enough time. Can't we dust off our SR-71s and take high altitude photos or something?"

"No need to dust them off, there are still 6 planes operational or in reserve, at either Edwards Air Force Base or Plant 42; two A-12s and four SR-71s."

"I didn't know that, the government said that they were all retired."

"Do you believe everything the government tells you? I got some ocean front property in Arizona; from my front porch you can see the sea; if you'll buy that, I'll throw the golden gate in free."

"George Strait?"

"Yep."

"That's sure a good description of the government."

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What was actually happening, as we would later learn was that the Chinese offered to buy all of the Mexican oil for \$140 a barrel plus help the government with the drug war.

The Chinese Army, aka People's Liberation Army, spread out south of our border, from Tijuana to Mexicali to Juárez and on down to Río Bravo and Matamoros. Far enough back of the border that a typical aircraft flight wouldn't see them yet close enough to close the distance in fairly short order.

A SR-71 from Edwards AFB, was loaded with film and fuel, took off, was refueled and flew along the border, just inside US air space. The plane landed, the film was retrieved and developed. The Chinese buildup was obvious from the photos and the president ordered US forces including all active duty, reserve and National Guard units to secure the border. It's a long border and we only had one M1A3 for every kilometer (border = 3141 km 1,969 mi). The Bradley M2A3 IFVs and M3A3 CFV aren't really bulletproof. They're supposed to provide protection up to a 30mm cannon. Marie announced that she heard from a ham in Texas about the US military buildup.

"Now, that pisses me off! The last time we were invaded was by Pancho Villa at Columbus, New Mexico in 1916."

"Well, like you said Jonas, it's a long way to here from El Paso."

"Yeah...but they outnumber us 2:1. They have largest standing Army in the World."

Do you remember Jeanie and Bob? I thought we'd seen the last of them back in 2009. We went into Camdenton to do some clothes shopping and stopped for lunch. No, Jeanie wasn't a waitress, but Bob and she were there.

"Marie?"

"Jeanie?"

"Just passing through?"

"Actually, we moved here in late 2010. Where did Bob and you go?"

"Around, no place in particular. Do you live here in Camdenton?"

"In the area. What's your take on this attack?"

"That's why we're still here; we're waiting for the new engine computer to be delivered. We were just passing through when there was a bright flash in the sky and the car died. Someone said it was EMT."

"Actual Jeanie," I corrected her, "It was EMP, a high altitude nuclear detonation, called an electromagnetic pulse, intended to disable the power grid, electronics and anything electric connected to long lines."

"They said our new computer will be here any day."

“I hope so. Good luck.”

We left and found some other place to eat. Only a few places were open because of the loss of electricity. We had to settle for the new Maid Rite restaurant they'd opened recently. It had a large grill with sides that contained crumbled ground beef and a gas powered deep fat fryer. They also had a big generator out back; we could hear it. The food was good and we next finished shopping, buying extra sets of boots, jeans, underwear and shirts. We didn't have Levi jackets and we got both lined and unlined Wrangler jackets plus oilskin dusters. According to the salesman, the long oilskin duster featured leg straps and traditionally styled front and back capes. It had a snap front closure with snap-over storm flap; oversized double entry patch pockets and adjustable snap cuffs plus inside draw string waist. They also had Double S slickers.

The oilskins ran \$99, the slickers \$25, the unlined jackets \$38 and the lined jackets \$60. Since they were denim, they would really last. We bought two kinds of boots, cowboy boots and work boots. It's claimed you can tell who is a Saturday Night Cowboy and a real cowboy by the amount of horse shit on their boots. With our shopping finished, Marie and I returned to the farm.

“If any of you need clothing, the store in Camdenton that sells Wranglers is still taking cash. Old fashion receipt book, but they're taking FRNs. Cash only, come to think about it.”

“What did you guys get?” Sarah asked.

“We got jeans, shirts, underwear, socks, cowboy and work boots, lined and unlined jackets, oilskin dusters and yellow slickers.”

“Wrangler brand?”

“Yes Jonas, why?”

“We have dusters too, but they came from down under and are called drover coats. The ones we bought were Walkabout brand. We also got the fleece liners.”

“We didn't see any fleece liners.”

“We don't have slickers; did you say \$25?”

“Yes.”

“Molly, feel like a ride to Camdenton?”

“Hold on, Sarah and I will go with you.”

There was only a very small amount of small talk between my cousins and me. I had the distinct impression that they weren't happy with us living in the hunting shack. I grabbed Marie and said, "Let's get our new clothes home and put up."

"Positively frosty in that house."

"Yeah, me too. That's why I came up with the clothes excuse. We'll get a fire going in the potbellied stove, another in the kitchen stove and we can eat dinner here."

"I can take ice cream out of the freezer if you want to warm up."

"At the moment, a few choice words come to mind."

"Save them for someone who wants to hear them. How about a casserole? Tuna and noodles ok?"

"Perfect. It's strange how before we came to live on the farm we were missing some of the finer things in life."

"Like what?"

"Horse riding, being able to shoot when we want, having a large enough garden to feed two families and good, hard work where you know what you've accomplished at the end of the day."

"I just hope it lasts."

"That Chinese invasion?"

"Well, it could happen."

"It probably is happening. We'd be the last to know, the government would be pulling out all stops to move the military to the border. If it were me in the White House, I dust off an SR-71, load it with film and fuel and top it off after it took off. Then, it could fly the length of the border, take photographs and land. From the altitude they fly, they could see forever. Can you imagine flying at 80,000 feet going Mach 3.2? From an altitude of 80,000 feet, it can survey 100,000 square miles per hour of the Earth's surface. In addition, it is accurate enough to take a picture of a car's license plate from that altitude."

"Dinner's ready. If you ever do decide to run for president, I'll vote for you."

"Thank you, I think."

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"Don, got your ears on?"

“We’re here Pete, just finishing up dinner.”

“Was it something I said?”

“I’ll explain when I see you.”

“Five am. Bring Marie and she can help Sarah fix breakfast for the brats.”

“Et tu Brute?”

“I thought so. Sorry about that. I guess we’re going to have to kick some butt.”

“You may only make a bad situation worse.”

“Well, don’t hold it against us, we did our best.”

“Ok, see you at five.”

“Pete said...”

“I heard. It sounds to me like those kids and grandkids of theirs are beginning to wear out their welcome.”

“That may be, but he won’t ask them to leave. At least while they’re here, they have all of the conveniences, don’t want for food and have a space in the shelter.”

“That’s another thing, only you and I plus Jonas and Molly had to hot rack, all of their kids and grandkids had beds of their own.”

“That’s probably because he didn’t have us or Jonas and Molly in mind when he built the bunkroom.”

“Maybe we can sleep in the basement of the barn.”

“I see, want to go for a roll in the hay?”

“Mind your mouth.”

“I just meant...”

“I know exactly what you meant and I didn’t say no, I just said mind your mouth.”

“I wonder how they came up with that name, *Snake Doctor*.”

The Hunting Shack – Chapter 10

“Didn’t they say on the show?”

“Not that I can remember. I liked that show; I wonder when they took it off the air.”

“Maybe it was still playing.”

“Not likely, the TV audience seems to change their appetite frequently.”

“Good morning.”

“Mornin. Marie is up at the house helping Sarah. About what I said last night...”

“Treating Marie and you like outsiders? I know and so does Sarah. I will have a word with the boys and Sarah with our daughter. If they give you anymore crap, feel free to put them in their place.”

“What exactly is their place?”

“Well, long story short, they don’t live here and none of them is interested in farming. I plan to have our lawyer draw up a will that puts ownership of the farm in a trust and the land in your hands, if you want it. You’ll make payments to the trust and the trust will evenly divide your payments among those three. I heard the fourth quarter section may be available and if it is, I’ll be buying it. It’s all tillable land and if you plan well, you can farm it by yourself. If not, you can get a hired hand.”

“What would you grow?”

“I’d grow 80 acres of oats, 80 acres of corn and 240 acres of canola plus the alfalfa. You could produce around 30,500 gallons of biodiesel in less than 2 months. By the way, Jonas contacted a buddy of his on the radio last night. Apparently the president has federalized all National Guard units, called up all of the Reserve units and sent them and the active military units to the border with Mexico. Jonas said you’d know what it means.”

“It means that they got an SR-71 airborne and took a look see. They saw something they didn’t like, maybe troops massing, and we’re trying to block the border.”

“Can we do that?”

“We can do it; the question is can we succeed.”

“And...”

“Who else has B-2 bombers, F-117 Nighthawks, and F-22s? A few allies have F-35s, but I doubt they will be involved. Someone ought to get a bugler down on the border playing El Degüello for the Mexicans supporting the Chinese.”

“Now wouldn’t that be appropriate.”

“Only problem will be that portion of the border not divided by the Río Grande, El Paso west to California.”

“Bombing runs to keep it clear?”

“Unless I miss my guess, yes. We have plenty of places to base tanker aircraft and the Navy and Marines can bring in their Hornets. Add to that our F-15s, F-16s, F-22s and our F-35s together with the B-1Bs, B-2s and F-117s. Even if they took the wings off the F-117s like they claim, it wouldn’t take that long to bolt them back on.”

“Why not nuke ‘em with tactical nukes?”

“Nuke ‘em all and let God sort them out? Well, because that would give them an excuse to use their own. Those 2,000-pound JDAMs are more than enough. And we have cluster bombs, FAEs, the MOAB, etc. Between our three large bombers, we can drop enough directed ordnance to equal or exceed several of those missions against German cities back WW II.”

“That’s right.”

“Jonas, I thought you slept in.”

“I’m an early riser Pete. Thought I’d lend a hand and work up an appetite. What can I do?”

“You can feed the horses and hogs while we finish up milking. If you get done before we do, gather the eggs and take them to Sarah.”

At the moment, we were milking 30 cows and using 10 milking machines. It took about an hour to milk them all and put the milk in the cooling tank. It wasn’t just the milking that took time, we also had to wash the udders, empty the milk buckets, move the bucket strap and so forth.

The new underground barn had the vacuum pump, the vacuum lines and new milk cooler. Pete didn’t buy more of the Surge milkers, only some spare parts, like udder cups, etc. When I had asked why he used the old equipment, his reply was, “They were good enough for my father.”

“Done?”

“For now.”

“Good, the president is making an announcement at 10am Eastern. We have time for breakfast before he comes on.”

Breakfast consisted of eggs to order, Canadian bacon, orange juice, coffee and toast. Anyone not present for the early serving would get scrambled eggs, toast, orange juice and coffee. After breakfast we turned on the radio with the volume down and visited, waiting for the address to begin.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the president.

My fellow Americans,

Our intelligence assets have revealed the buildup of a very large force of troops just south of the American border with Mexico. All leaves have been canceled and soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines are ordered to report to their units by the fastest means possible. In addition, all military reserve units have been activated. Finally, all National Guard units have been federalized for the duration of hostilities. Our air assets have been fully equipped and are standing by to deliver such conventional munitions as may be necessary.

Attempts by our Ambassador to Mexico for a dialogue have been rebuffed. I am left with no recourse except to prepare for an extended conflict. Until forces cross our border or enter our airspace, I cannot order our troops to attack. Rest assured that when and if that happens we will respond and try to limit their incursion into our country.

Lincoln once found himself in a not dissimilar situation during the Civil War. In that instance he found it necessary to suspend Habeas Corpus. I find myself in a similar situation and as of now, the writ of Habeas Corpus is suspended for the duration.

I must also suspend Posse Comitatus for the reason stated. Primary authority for law enforcement with still rest with civilian agencies, however when civilian authorities are not present or immediately available, military units may enforce the laws of the United States and the state in which they are operating.

Finally, pursuant to Title 10 § 311 subsection b, item 2, the unorganized militia, which consists of the members of the militia who are not members of the National Guard or the Naval Militia, will be on call, as needed. To that end, surplus ammunition stocks will be made available by National Guard representatives at your nearest National Guard Armory.

I ask every American to pray for a successful outcome.

God Bless America.

“He sounded just like Dubya.”

“You heard the man, lock and load. Where’s the nearest Armory?”

“I don’t know where the nearest is, but Fort Leonard Wood isn’t that far and probably has a bigger ammo supply.”

“I agree with Don, the only other place that I can think of is Jefferson City. I say we try Ft. Leonard Wood.”

“Plus, Jonas knows his way around down there and some of his friends might be more generous when comes to handing out ammo.”

“Militia is required to provide personal weapons but not ammunition?”

“Most people wouldn’t possess sufficient ammo for an extended conflict. The military currently has two small arms rifle calibers, 5.56×45 and 7.62×51. Others do, of course. If any of you decide to join in the fray, remember that militia only consists of males age 17 or older and under age 45.”

“What about handgun ammo?”

“It’s mostly 9mm FMJ; but since Operators prefer the .45, .45ACP FMJ.”

“Damn, no hollow point.”

“Do you really need ammo?”

“There are three things you can’t have too much of, ammo, toilet paper and coffee.”

“You’ll get M80 ball; and M855. Since the president said, come get it, let’s go get it before he changes his mind, again.”

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“Wow, a lifetime supply.”

“They only gave us on the order of 3,000-rounds. We could go through that in no time.”

“*Snake Doctor*, that assumes we live that long. Pete says his two boys and son-in-law flatly refuse to go.”

“He should have sent them to the Army like his Dad sent him.”

“Pete never said anything about being in the military that I can recall.”

“Got the Bronze Star with a V at the tail end of ‘Nam.”

“Doing what?”

“Ask him. He was one of the few who had an M14 near the end of the conflict. Damned fine shot, too. I always thought he deserved the Silver Star, but those officers didn’t agree.”

“Anyway, I guess it’s going to be just the three of us.”

“If they don’t want to go, we don’t want them. That attitude might just get the rest of us killed.”

“Did he say if we’re expected to go or just standby?”

“He said standby; regardless what he said, I’m going.”

“Me, too.”

“Make that three. And if we get out of this alive, my children are in for a very unpleasant surprise. We’ll take our high quality ammo and leave the cheaper stuff for them to practice, not that it will do much good. I think that it will boil down the Sarah, Molly and Marie protecting the farm if the opposition gets this far. We’ll take 1/3 of our ordnance and leave the remainder for those three. I told Sarah that as far as I’m concerned they’ve worn out their welcome. Since it appears we won’t have the GTW, they can leave anytime. I also told her to fill their tanks and give them enough cash to buy generators when they get home.”

“It’s none of my business, but aren’t you being harsh?”

“Like you said Don, it’s none of your business. Next order of business, do we take tray packs or MREs?”

“Pete the tray packs feed 18 people, we’d better stick with the MREs. What kind do you have?”

“Civilian Sopakco brand aka SurePak complete with heaters and accessory packs. I added several cartons of cigarettes and I suppose you brought some of those stogies. The cookware is simple blue enamel stuff plus a 12 cup coffee pot. There are about 6 months’ worth of rations. In case we find some real food there’s a cooking set, assorted spices, extra bath tissue and our ordnance.”

“What kind of cigarettes?”

“I didn’t know you smoked.”

The Hunting Shack – Chapter 11

“I quit; but this seems like as good a time as any to take it back up.”

“If we’re lucky, the mess cooks will probably turn a blind eye and feed us whatever the troops are eating. Is everyone squared away with their LBE, water supplies and weapons?”

“I know I am; Pete?”

“Damned right I’m ready. I grabbed an extra box of 20-round rifle magazines and anything I thought might prove useful, including a 4-man tent, folding grill for over the fire pit and even a small porta john. Let’s tell our wives goodbye and light the fires.”

“Ok, but the president didn’t call us up, yet.”

“Yeah, but if we wait, we miss all of the fun.”

“I’m putting four horses in the horse trailer with our gear. I suggest y’all get your cowboy guns and clothes. We can do a little free ranging down at the border, like those Minute-men sometimes do. Jonas, can you help me load hay and grain into the other two stalls?”

“Sure, but will that be enough?”

“We can find more down around El Paso if we run out.”

The pickup carried 168 gallons of diesel and at 10 miles per gallon; we could get there and part way home. Pete added an empty drum and filled it with more biodiesel, giving us a total of 2,230 miles at the same mileage rate. He said that if we could find some long, flat stretches of road, we could extend the range to over 2,500 miles.

Marie was clearly upset that I was going; however, I think it was more her being upset with Pete’s boys and son-in-law for not going. We had a wide assortment of ordnance, a little something for nearly every situation. Rockets, a grenade launcher, assorted hand grenades, Claymore mines, demolition charges, our military ammo and precision Black Hills ammo. Weapons wise, we each had a M1911 pattern .45ACP handgun, usually with aftermarket magazines that held more rounds, 28 M14 magazines each, a quality 7.62x51mm rifle with a scope and a late addition, suppressors. There were the 12 gauge shotguns and the big boys in arsenal, the Tac-50 and M107s. Regardless of the circumstances, we had an appropriate firearm. The handgun ammo was Speer Gold Dot; never send a boy to do a man’s job.

Two days later, we pulled into El Paso, and found it necessary to weave our way around all of the US military assembled there. Eventually, we were stopped and asked for identification by the people running military security. Jonas had his retired military ID, and he

was in the clear. Pete and I were not so lucky and Jonas asked to see the Company Commander.

“Captain, Pete here served in ‘Nam and got the bronze star. I can vouch for him without hesitation. Young Don, did his tour in Iraqi Freedom as an Army Designated Marksman, I’d appreciate it if you could cut him some slack. I’ve seen him shoot and he’s better than most of the troops under your command.”

“The president hasn’t called up the militia.”

“We know, but we’re here and are willing to participate if you’ll just give us a chance.”

“Fill me in on your former ranks.”

“I was a Command Sergeant Major, Pete was a Sergeant. Don, what was your rank?”

“Staff Sergeant.”

“Here take these forms and fill in the blanks, my clerk will issue you temporary ID. While he’s doing that, I have a word with the Battalion Commander and see about some kind of Carte Blanche so our side won’t hassle you. What do you have for a vehicle?”

“A pickup. However, we brought a string of horses, three to ride and one as a pack animal. It will give us enhanced mobility.”

“What will you need? I can give you ammo, and hand grenades.”

“We brought our own and picked up an allotment at Leonard Wood. We wouldn’t mind another crate of M72s, although we can get by with what we have. Let us know if you run short on anything, maybe we can help.”

“You brought that much?”

“Well we’d rather have it...”

“I know the feeling; some of the armor units are short on both Sabot and Heat. The A3s are fully equipped although some the earlier versions aren’t. If it was up to me, we’d invade Mexico and try to catch them with their pants down.”

“What’s the status of their buildup?”

“According to the Blackbird flights they’re level of readiness is 90% or higher.”

“Are the Chinese and Mexican troops merged?”

“Mexico is holding their troops back and appears to be leaving the fighting to the Chinese. Keep an eye on the Mexicans; they have that new assault rifle, the FX05.”

“Any chance on our getting some body armor?”

“We’re short ourselves. The LAWs might be arranged, but it would only be 2 packages or 10 rockets.”

“If you can get them, we’ll be happy to take them. The same goes for the M67s. We have Mil Spec smoke grenades.”

“Where did you get those?”

“A place called Ammunition To Go.”

“I’ll see you back here in an hour.”

“Why did you lie about the smoke grenades?”

“I couldn’t tell him I had appropriated them and as it happens, that place I named sells Mil Spec smoke grenades.”

Over the course of the next hour, Pete and I were fingerprinted, had our pictures taken and issued the temporary IDs. Since we could provide both our previous service numbers and SSNs, the IDs bore our SSNs. Jonas got away with the clerk issuing an updated ID. We were shown to a lounge and had a cup of coffee and a stale donut. When the Captain returned, he said that he couldn’t get the Carte Blanche. We got 12 M67s apiece and 10 additional M72s giving us each 10 of those. With our IDs in the system, we’d get by and he handed us rank insignia. We drove west along the border and set up near Malpais, New Mexico, maybe half way between El Paso and Columbus.

We set up camp in the only unexposed place we could find. With Coleman stoves, a heater and lanterns we didn’t need a fire pit. After that, we saddled up and armed ourselves, first, with our cowboy guns. I added my Miami Classic rig and climbed into my saddle, with the Mossberg slung over my back and my M1A in hand. My spare magazines were in my saddlebags along with an MRE and two plastic water canteens. Each of us was similarly armed with which ever shotgun and pistol he preferred. It was about a mile to the border and we headed south.

“Keep your eyes open for a recon party. It might help if we could we could see them before they see us,” Jonas joked.

“And then what?”

“We’ll ambush them using the suppressed M1As.”

“I can see the fence.”

“Is it still intact?”

“Maybe, I can’t tell from here. You guys stay here and cover my six; I’ll go check it out and call you on channel 19.”

Squawk... “It’s been cut and is being held in place with two wire ties. The most recent prints are headed north. I’ll start tracking them and you two can catch up.”

“10-4.”

Pete was following the tracks from off to one side and when we found them, we rode on the other side. We followed them all of the way to the highway and beyond. One would have thought that they would have walked on the highway for a ways to make it harder for anyone to track them. However, they just crossed Highway 9 and kept going. There is nothing of note north except I-10 between Las Cruces and Deming. Perhaps they were trying to skirt Fort Bliss and White Sands. We eventually caught up to them about 4 miles further on. We dismounted, hobbled the horses and move ahead on foot. It looked more like a patrol than a recon team.

“That’s a recon patrol,” Jonas whispered. “Find a good spot and we’ll take them down; wait until I fire.”

The patrol leader seemed to be Mexican and the other 10 men were either Chinese or Mexicans, evenly divided. Pete and I settled in, selected targets and waited to hear Jonas’s rifle. The first round of fire reduced their number to 8 totally confused troops looking around to see where the fire came from. The second round of fire reduced their number to 5, but they had a good idea where the fire was coming from and began firing in our general direction. The third round killed two more and wounded a third, leaving them with two intact soldiers and one with an undetermined wound. It also allowed the two remaining individuals to direct their fire right at us.

Squawk... “Hold your fire; let’s wait them out.”

A minute or two later the 2 remaining men began to work on the third, apparently assuming we were moving to a new position. With them distracted, that’s exactly what we did, with Jonas selecting a place for each of us. Our positions were slightly staggered to prevent us from killing each other in a cross fire. When they finished tending to the wounded man, he got up and with his arms around the shoulders of the 2 others; they began their trek back south. They made it 50 yards before we took all three of them down.

Next, we collected their arms and ammunition plus all of their maps and papers. The leader was one of the first we had killed. He was a Mexican and all his notes were in Spanish. I couldn’t make any sense of it nor could Pete. Jonas spoke Spanish as a 2nd

or 3rd language. As he translated the notes and evaluated the notations on the map, he let out a low whistle.

“We’ve got to get back to El Paso and get these to that Captain. They’re bypassing Bliss and heading north to I-40, apparently planning on spreading out from there. It would go much better if our forces could meet them head on.”

We tied their arms on behind our saddles and headed back south as fast as we dared. It was a slow gallop and the horses could only maintain it for about 2 miles before we had to slow them and let them rest. Even so, we were back at our camp in well under an hour and the Captain’s office within two.

“Thank you; you sure earned your pay today.”

“We get paid?”

“Sorry, it was just a figure of speech. If you gentlemen will excuse me, I have to get this to the Battalion. Draw any replacement ammo you might need.”

I don’t believe that the military packs 7.62 ammo in 12 round packs, so we went for some of the M118LR (three cases) and more of the rockets, getting a full crate and bringing us to 15 each. The M118LR was packed in 20 round boxes, 25 boxes to the case. There is a difference between M118 and M118LR. The former is 173gr FMJ, while the latter is 175gr BTHP Sierra MatchKing. They also use different powders. There is a difference between the brass case and powder if you compare Black Hills 175gr with the M118LR.

“I think I may have been the shooter who wounded that guy,” Jonas said. “He moved just as the trigger let off.”

“Don’t worry about it; it could have happened to any of us. The recon patrol is dead and the information they gathered is in the hands of the Army. I brought that big cooler and it’s loaded with special treats for when we have a good day. How does steak and potatoes sound?”

“We’ll have to dig a fire pit to bake the potatoes, but there’s some hickory charcoal in the horse trailer. We can set up the folding grill and grill our steaks after the potatoes are done.”

“The only thing we’re missing is a bottle of bourbon.”

“I brought some, but it has only aged 6 years so it probably won’t be as smooth as you like.”

“Got a finger in everything, don’t you Pete?”

The Hunting Shack – Chapter 12

“I try. I’m not sure how long the dry ice will keep, so we’ll probably have to eat up the steaks.”

When Pete opened the cooler, I noted a solid block of dry ice about the exact size of the cooler bottom. A block of dry ice that large, lacking a lot of exposed surface area, would last for several days, especially in the cooler. I guess that explained why the cooler occasionally burped. The spuds were scrubbed, wrapped in foil and added to the coals.

When they could be squeezed, the folding grill was set up and the steaks lay on top. I like my steak 7 minutes on a side, medium, and Pete and Jonas were 5 minute men, rare. Before we got too far into the bourbon, we took a few minutes to clean our rifles using Breakfree CLP, a rag and a bore snake. We sat around visiting until the fire died out and went to bed. The four man tent was barely large enough for the three of us.

The following morning, we took turns at the porta potti and washed up. Pete put on a pot of coffee and dug out MREs with breakfast entrees. While we didn’t have an unlimited supply of water, there was enough for everyone to take a sponge bath. I decided that I leave my Winchester and Vaquero in the trailer, put the Mossberg in the scabbard and carry the M1A like we did the previous day. My P-14 was in my Miami Classic with two counter side magazines and more in my saddlebags. This way, I could wear my Tac Force vest with 8 magazines and six grenades. I carried white smoke attached to loops on the Tac Force straps.

“Dig out one of those Claymores and we’ll erect a little surprise at that cut in the fence. We’ll do it by the book for an uncontrolled role.”

Specifically:

The M18A1 mine is deliberately detonated by the operator pulling or cutting a trip wire attached to a nonelectrical firing device. A nonelectric blasting cap attached to the firing device and crimped to a length of detonating cord sets off the detonating cord. At the other end of the detonating cord, a second crimped nonelectric blasting cap, which is inserted in one of the detonator wells, detonates the mine.

On this day, we saw no one cross the border and neither was the Claymore tripped. The steaks were still hard as a rock and we decided to save them until we were forced to eat them or had another good day. We made plans for the following day, which included moving the pickup 5 miles west and riding the border on our horses. We left the Claymore where it had been placed (a trip wire setup) and rode east to where we saw our horse tracks from the day before and turned west aiming for another five miles from our starting place before cutting a line back to our camp.

As we came close to our new camp, we saw several individuals there, armed individuals. Jonas took out his binoculars to check them out.

“Hispanics. However, that doesn’t mean much in Texas, they have been part of the scene since before the Alamo. More than 1/3 of the population is Hispanic. Why don’t we tie down the horses and move up to check on them? It would be a pure shame if we killed some guys whose families had been here for 15 generations.”

With nothing to tie the horses to, we hobbled them and spread out, Pete to the left, Jonas in the middle and me to the right. Jonas took a slight lead. When he was well within hearing range, he called out, “Hola.” The men were spooked and brought their rifles to bear.

“Who in the hell are you?”

“Name’s Jonas. Wasn’t sure if you spoke English or not, hence the greeting in Spanish.”

“Not that it’s any of your business, but none of us speaks Spanish. We came down to the border to lend a hand repelling the Mongol invader.”

“Yep, so did we.”

“We?”

“Show yourselves fellas.”

“Are you guys some of that Minuteman organization?”

“No. I’m a retired Army Sergeant and my friends are former Army, one served in ‘Nam and the other in Iraqi Freedom.”

“Sling your rifles; I think the Army has arrived. My name is Joseph. From left to right are Rick, Juan and Jose. We all met up in the Corps over in Iraq.”

“Those invaders are going to come up short. Are you fellas on foot?”

“No, we hobbled our horses when we saw the camp. What about you?”

“We hobbled our horses when we saw you.”

“Ok if we join you?”

“Sure, more is always better in a situation like this. No AR-15s?”

“Well, there was John Moses Browning, John C. Garand and Eugene M. Stoner. Two out three ain’t half bad. That’s why we all have M1As. We agreed on the Loaded model as having the most bang for the buck. We’ll go get our horses and meet you back here, in 15-20 minutes.”

“Pete, Don, let’s go get the horses.”

We had all 4 horses, our saddle horses and one with packs to carry extra M72s, assorted grenades and M18A1s. We each had one M72 tied behind our saddles using the saddle thongs to hold it in place. The Marines, I noticed, had an assortment of ALICE, MOLLE or Tac Force gear to carry their equipment. They didn’t have a 5th horse, they had a mule.

We arrived back before they did and set up our tent, dug out the folding table and set the Coleman stoves up, also taking the Coleman lanterns from their carrying cases. We took our 4 folding chairs from the front of the horse trailer and pulled out 7 steaks to thaw. We scrubbed and wrapped 7 potatoes and dug a fire pit, adding charcoal.

“You guys travel first class.”

“We try Joseph.”

“Make it Joe, Jonas. We heard you call to the others, which one of you is Pete and which one Don?”

“I’m Pete,” Pete identified himself.

“Then you must be Don,” Joe said, extending his hand.

“Nice to meet you Joe. Hope you’re working up an appetite; we took out steaks and baking potatoes. What did the four of you do in the Corps?”

“We all were in the Infantry, Designated Marksmen.”

“Ironic, I was an Army Designated Marksman.”

“You used the M21?”

“I did. I assumed you used the modified M14 Designated Marksman Rifle?”

“We did. That’s why we went with the M1As when we got out. It was cheaper to buy the Loaded model and add the bipod, scope and cheek rest. 1:11 will work with the same ammo we used over there, the M118LR.”

“I prefer 168gr Black Hills BTHP, but we picked up some M118LR from the Army to replace the ammo we shot up.”

“You engaged the enemy? Are you sure, they could have been Texans, just as we are.”

“Half of their squad was Chinese, that Mongol Horde you referred to. Anyway, we only fired 12 rounds, but since the Army was willing to part with three 500-round cases of M118LR and a full crate of M72s, who were we to say no?”

“Could you spare some of the M118LR?”

“Sure.”

“Say, what did you think of that oddball speech the president gave?”

“Which speech; his Day of Infamy speech or the speech calling out the unorganized militia?”

“The first one. It seemed strangely familiar.”

“That was a reworded copy of the speech FDR gave after Pearl Harbor. We don’t much like the idea of the president suspending Habeas Corpus, and there is no precedent for suspending Posse Comitatus since the provisions of the John Warner Act were repealed and we don’t have an insurrection or a known nuclear threat.”

“They repealed the John Warner Appropriations Act provisions? Well, I’ll be damned.”

Joseph’s friends were apparently unaware of the repeal and voiced concerns about the president’s actions. However, given the HEMP and the presence of the Chinese in Mexico, plus the assurance that the military would only intervene in the absence of civilian law enforcement authority, the Marines were of a mind to cut the president some slack. Their cooler was filled with Coors beer and they readily shared. Our dry ice hadn’t completely evaporated so it would take a while for the steaks to thaw.

They were from San Antonio and had considered going to Laredo to lend a hand but in the end decided on El Paso. They had ended up being stopped and quizzed by the same Army Security Company and issued temporary IDs. They hadn’t been offered ordnance. We explained exactly where the Claymore was set at the cut in the fence.

The group was also using CB portables for communications and we all agreed to communicate on channel 31. We were now 7 men, all veterans and at least 6 of the 7 had demonstrable marksmanship skills. Jonas remained, for me, an unknown commodity because, as he admitted, he missed his first shot.

“Why did you set a Claymore?”

“The fence was cut and we followed their tracks, eventually catching up with them about 4 miles north the highway. With us outnumber 3 to 1; we started taking them out 3 at a time. We wounded one and while his friends attended to his wound, we relocated. We waited until they got close and took the last 3 down. We collected their arms and ammo plus all of their papers. Jonas speaks Spanish and determined the Army in El Paso

needed the information. We took it in and got more ammo and rockets. Early this morning, we installed the Claymore with a trip wire.”

“It was a recon patrol and when they don’t show up, maybe they’ll send another party.”

“I don’t mean to be overly nosey, but what kind of equipment do you have?”

“In general terms each of us have, a .50 caliber rifle, a M1A, a 12-gauge shotgun and a M1911 pattern pistol. We also each have an 1886 Winchester and a single action SAA revolver, including some Colts and some of the original model Vaqueros. We started with 20 LAWs and then picked up 10 more and in exchange for the recon team info another full crate. We also have a Milkor M32 Multiple Grenade Launcher with 6 dozen HEDP rounds. Our hand grenades include M61, M67, Mk3A2 and AN M14 TH3 Thermate. Finally, we have smoke grenades in every color, with a majority of them being Willy Pete.”

“What did you do, clean out an Armory?”

“No, but it’s a long story. We knew someone in supply at Fort Leonard Wood. And since Jonas is a retired CSM, he was well connected.”

“Stock M107s?”

“Factory new fellas and sighted in. Pete and Jonas bought the BORS from Barrett for their rifles. Pete gave me a McMillan Tac-50 bolt action with Nightforce scope, night vision rail and a MUNS. We have about 10,000-rounds of .50 caliber ammo, but didn’t bring it all. And, we didn’t bring any of the M136 AT4s we have back home.”

“How many did you bring?”

“Enough.”

We were still holding our cards close in case they turned out not to be who they said they were. They set up their tent, a 10x14, a folding table and chairs, one Coleman dual fuel stove and two lanterns. They also had the 100 quart Igloo cooler containing an assortment of food plus MREs for when they were away from camp. Except for the .50 caliber rifles, their arsenal was the same as ours, minus the military hardware. We could share grenades. We gave them 2 cases of M118LR, 12 M72 rockets, 12 M67s, 12 M61s, some concussion, Thermate and a bunch of smoke plus 4 Claymores.

We finally got the coals going and started the spuds. We were just taking our steaks off the fire grate when we heard a distant boom.

“Let’s eat while it’s hot and go see how many we got. It was set to cover a wide area of the fence.”

The Hunting Shack – Chapter 13

Before long, we had the horses saddled and set off to check the results. We also brought 3 more Claymores. This time, it was only a rifle team, cut to ribbons. We drug the bodies through the fence and hid them in an arroyo. We cleaned up the area and planted the three new Claymores, spread out to provide maximum coverage. We used a single trip wire and several feet of Det cord, the same as the previous setup with triple the number of mines.

Then we collected their weapons and ammo plus their papers. Notations in the margin revealed a timeline so we returned to camp and our new friends stood by while we drove to El Paso to once again report what we had learned.

“Damn, this is good, what do I owe you this time?”

“Two cases of M118LR, 6 Claymore mines and more of the M72 rockets if you have them.”

“Sergeant, help these three get what they need, I’m headed to Battalion.”

We got the ammo, mines and rockets and the Sergeant asked, “Anything else?”

“Yes, 7 M40 gas masks and some CS, CR or CN gas grenades.”

“I’ve got CS.”

“That’s fine.”

The US hasn’t used CR since ‘Nam and CN is even more deadly, occasionally causing fatalities. OC gas is otherwise known as Pepper Spray and CR is also called Mace. All four are classified as riot control agents. CS is essentially tear gas. When we arrived back, they were waiting up and we gave them the two additional cases of M118LR, 4 more rockets and 4 of the M40s.

“What did he say?”

“He said, *Give ‘em what they want, I’ve got to get to Battalion.* So, we just naturally got all we thought we could get away with. They’ve learned that the M40s deteriorate when exposed to mustard gas and they have a new mask. The Sergeant didn’t have any of those to spare. They’re called the M50 JSGPM (Joint Services Gas Protective Mask).”

“Do really think we’ll need gas masks?”

“You never know. We have some Mk 1 NAAK kits but no CANAs (Diazepam). Does everyone remember their gas mask drills?”

Everyone affirmed to Jonas that they did and he passed out the M40s and 3 Mk 1 kits per person. As is often the case, it was better to have them and not need them than to need them and not have them. We discussed it and decided to do a horse patrol covering the section of the border from where our Claymores were set up to a point about 8 miles west. We could see Contrails high above us, presumably our aircraft flying above 26,000'.

We concluded that the military had probably put everything that could fly in the sky or on standby waiting for the border crossing. The very fact that a recon squad had crossed apparently hadn't triggered any action. Our bomber forces could carry a lot of bombs. The BUFF could carry 180 of the Small Diameter bombs, the B-1B could haul 24 JDAMs and the Spirit could haul 216 SDMs. So, between the precision guided SDMs and the larger JDAMs, our bomber fleet could take a heavy toll. Add to that our F-15Es still in service, the F/A-18s and the F-35s and the enemy would be up against a wall of bombs. If they somehow managed to get past the bombs, they'd be up against arguably the best tank in the world, the M1A3. That omits discussion of our artillery forces including our M109A6 Paladin self-propelled 155mm cannons, M270 and M142 MLRS and the new NLOS cannon. Air cover would be provided by F-22s.

No doubt Predators and other unmanned aerial vehicles were prowling the skies above the Chinese forces, providing data to our assembling forces. Our horse patrol wasn't intended to fight the whole damned Chinese Army, just some of their recon patrols. Did the Chinese have drones? Probably, but we could shoot them down faster than they could launch them, we had technology on our side.

One thing that seemed apparent was that the enemy wanted our infrastructure mostly intact; why else would they limit the initial attack to 3 HEMP devices and land troops in Mexico preparatory to an invasion? Did they forget what Yamamoto said after Pearl Harbor, *I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve*. Whether or not he actually said that is disputed, nonetheless, the warning is obvious. The quote was in the movie, *Tora, Tora, Tora*.

[Aside: Minoru Genda, the man who largely planned and led the attack on Pearl Harbor was an uncredited technical advisor for the film.]

A person has to ask himself what the enemy has to use against us. Undoubtedly, the Chinese would use most of their later model tanks from T-80s up to and including the T-99s. One has to realize that there has been an arms race since the Second World War ended. It started when Russia displayed their IS-2 tanks in Paris at the end of WW II. It was further fueled when Russia exploded their first atomic bomb. If Russia had developed stealth, it was: 1) a secret; and, 2) not shared with other countries, like China. If I had my druthers, I'd prefer to be back home in our hunting shack and not on a border 900 miles away. Pete, Jonas and I would be protecting the farm, not hunting Chinese and Mexican soldiers.

"We've got another cut in the fence."

“Can you tell how many came through?”

“Not really, I’d guess several, there are tracks on top of tracks and they’re packed down. They seem fresh; the edges of the top set are still sharp.”

“Do you want to go on horseback or on foot?”

“How far did you say you followed that last bunch?”

“About 4 miles. They probably came across just before dawn and that would put them north of the highway. I suppose we can ride to the highway and hoof it from there.”

“Sounds good. How about we try to take some prisoners, Jonas, you speak Spanish.”

“We can try; I won’t promise that we won’t kill some of them, but if they give up, I’m all for it. Turn the tables on them and let some of those Army spooks water board them.”

They spaced out some, no longer walking in single file, and we counted 8 sets of tracks. We followed them to the highway where tracks disappeared. Apparently, they’d read our minds. We split up with the 4 from San Antonio going west and we 3 going east. We got a call from Joe that they’d picked up the tracks going north one mile west of where they disappeared. He said they’d wait for us to get there.

When we arrived, Joe said the tracks were beginning to show signs of age and he suggested that we ride north following the tracks until they began to appear fresher. Around 2 miles north they did.

“Remember; take prisoners, if we can.”

We moved at a slightly faster than normal for about a mile before we spotted them. We found a place to hobble the horses and followed on foot.

The group was, again, half Chinese and half Mexican. While 6 of us took up places that afforded clear shots, Jonas yelled, “Hola. Nuestro grupo le tiene cubierto. Ahora entregúese o muera.” (Hello. Our group has you covered. Surrender now or die.)

The four Chinese apparently didn’t speak enough Spanish to understand and they wheeled ready to open fire. At what, they were uncertain, but ready nonetheless. The Mexican soldiers threw down their arms and raised their hands slightly. The Chinese, realizing that they were up against an unknown group, eventually did the same.

We moved up slowly, having switched to our shotguns, and bound their hands with cable ties. Juan and Jose collected their arms and Joe and Rick did the body search and collected papers. Jonas looked the papers over and said, “We’ve got to get these guys to El Paso immediately.”

We marched them back to where our horses were hobbled, stored the weapons on the pack animals, and mounted. They moved much faster with the big horses doing the plodding. When we got to the road, we turned to the direction of our camp and moved our prisoners as fast as we could. The Chinese went into the back of Joe's pick up and the Mexicans in the back of ours. We drove to El Paso and told the guard we had prisoners to turn over to the Captain.

"You're back this soon?"

"Yes Captain with 8 prisoners, 4 Mexicans and 4 Chinese. We thought you'd like these papers and a chance for the spooks to water board them."

"Officially, we don't do that anymore."

"I can teach you, if you need help," Jonas smirked.

"I really appreciate what you've done for us. Unfortunately, I have orders to pull in all of the unorganized militia groups and send them home. The attack is coming in just a few days and we want clear fields of fire for what we intend to do. I'm sorry; I can't explain further, orders. I can resupply you one more time, but you'll have to return home. Our fuel is limited although we can fill your tanks to get you home. Believe me when I say that you don't want to be caught in the middle."

"Ok Captain, we'll leave if we must. Can't you give us a hint why we should leave?"

"Alright, think about this: CEM, GATOR, SFW and PAW. Know what they are?"

"Guided Cluster Bombs?"

"We'll also be using C-130Js to deliver one more type of bomb."

"Ok Captain, we get the idea. We go home and we tell the guys we jointed up with to go back to San Antonio."

"I need the IDs back, Sergeant Major, you can keep yours. Tell those other men to turn theirs in, please."

After we took care of the paperwork, we found a place serving coffee and sat down to exchange full names, address, etc. with our new friends from San Antonio. I noticed that Rick had an unusual knife and asked about it.

"This is my Tantō. I had it engraved in Japanese, here look at the blade.

だれが名誉と住むことができないか死ななければならない名誉と。That's an expression taken from the opera *Madame Butterfly*, *Who cannot live with honor must die with*

honor. I carried it over there although it wasn't allowed. You Army guys have problems carrying knives too?"

"I carried an Explorer boot knife, but they wouldn't allow me to bring my Rambo I. The Explorer is made in Japan out of 440 stainless. It's a cheap knife, but holds a good edge. Got it used for ten bucks."

"My Tantō is American made, but with a Tantō, it doesn't make much difference. Finding an engraver who could engrave Japanese characters was the hard part. We'll go home like the Captain said, but if they don't pull it off we'll probably end up fighting them on the streets of San Antonio."

"Another Battle of the Alamo?"

"I hope not, they all died. Where are you from?"

"Rural Camdenton, Missouri. Lake of the Ozarks country."

We visited for a few more minutes, exchanged the information and left to requisition more supplies and fill our fuel tanks with JP-8. We scored 3 cases of M118LR, all they could spare, 36 M-67s, 6 M18A1 mines and some of the Willy Pete white smoke. In case you're curious, the 3 M18A1s at the first cut in the fence were still there. We hadn't had a chance to mine the second cut because the Captain sent us home.

We drove straight through to the farm, sharing driving. It took about 15 hours and we arrived home the next morning.

"The war over?"

"It hasn't begun although it will soon."

"Are you home for good or are you running off somewhere to save the world again."

"I'm here for good Marie. You have no idea how much I wished I was back home in our hunting shack."

"Those kids of Pete's have been a pain in the butt. They actually expect Sarah and me to wait on them hand and foot. I've had more than enough and I think Sarah is going to talk to Pete about sending them home. You recall that Pete said, *And if we get out of this alive, my children are in for a very unpleasant surprise*. Well. Sarah didn't fill their tanks and send them on their way. After she visits with Pete, I'd stake my life on them being told to leave."

"I'd be willing to bet that other than the generator money, he won't let them leave with anything they didn't bring."

Marie and I spent some quality time together at the shack and neither of us felt like going to the house. I took time to split more kindling for the kitchen stove and other chores that had been undone while I was gone. Around 6pm, Pete called on the radio and asked Marie and I to come to the house.

The Hunting Shack – Chapter 14

“I sent those no good kids of ours back home. We gave them enough gold to get a generator, fuel and food they might need, but I told them not to come back. I have time now to talk to a lawyer and get that nasty surprise prepared for them.”

“What do you intend to do?”

“The lawyer will advise me on the minimum amount I can leave them and it will be cash, Federal Reserve Notes. Sarah and you two will divide what remains. She gets the house and you get the land, livestock and so forth. I think I have enough cash on hand, but if I don't, I'll convert gold to cash and set it aside specifically for them.”

I didn't know what to say and looked at Marie. She looked as shocked as I was. Pete had gone from putting the land in a trust to giving it to us outright. He went on to say that after he'd gotten back and sent those kids off, he purchased the remaining quarter section, using gold; ½ ounce per acre or 80 ounces. I didn't know he had that much.

“I still have enough gold left to take care of Sarah and provide you operating capital, if you need it.”

“I don't mean to be nosey, but how much gold did you have?”

“\$100,000 worth at \$275 an ounce. Just short of 364 troy ounces.”

“I didn't realize that farming paid that well.”

“We inherited some when my parents and Sarah's parents died. Got back everything I paid for the farm, and then some. Your grandfather was very upset with your mother and disinherited her. Since I got your share of his estate, it's only fair that I pass it on to you.”

“Won't your children contest the will?”

“They can try. My attorney would fight that and try to get to me declared intestate. In most contemporary common-law jurisdictions, the law of intestacy is patterned after the common law of descent. Property goes first to a spouse, then to children and their descendants; if there are no descendants, the rule sends you back up the family tree to the parents, the siblings, the siblings' descendants, the grandparents, the parents' siblings, and the parents' siblings' descendants, and sometimes further to the more remote degrees of kinship. The operation of these laws varies from one jurisdiction to another. If that happens, Sarah will sell you whatever I left you for \$1 per acre and other good and valuable consideration. The sum of \$1 and other good and valuable consideration doesn't have to be defined.”

“A dollar doesn't seem like much.”

“In a PAW, who is to say how much land is worth? I effectively paid \$750 an acre for the quarter section; however, in reality, I paid \$137.50 per acre based on what the gold cost us. So, maybe \$640 for the farm is a fair price, especially since the will would have provisions providing for you to aid and care for Sarah for life.”

Pete obviously had his mind made up and it would do no good to dispute him. Sarah nodded at every word he said, indicating that she agreed completely. One other thing occurred to me. What if we did manage to stop the Chinese invasion? Would they then launch all of their nuclear weapons on the US? The people making such decisions weren't on the front lines in Mexico, they were in Beijing.

What was going on in other parts of the world? The EAS broadcasters reported local, state and national news and no International news. The attack on the US had to have had International implications. Consequently we found it disturbing that International news was unavailable. At the moment, we didn't even know where our naval assets were. Jonas and Molly joined us and a conversation evolved concerning our experience in El Paso.

“I've never know the Army to pass out ordnance like they did when we were down there. Even with the president ordering them to pass out ammunition, how do you reconcile that we got the anti-tank rockets, grenades and Claymore mines?”

“Don, I know the Captain. Since he didn't indicate that he recognized me, I figured something was up and let it pass. When we were issued temporary military IDs, it was more confirmation. And then, when he told the Sergeant to give us what we wanted, I was positive. I've heard him discussing the role of the militia in this country. He's a bit of a historian and graduated West Point in the top third of his class. He knows that the unorganized militia as presently constituted lacks the types of military arms our standing Army and National Guard unit have. Since we were all NCOs, we were to his way of thinking, proven leaders and capable of employing the weapons provided to good use. That may explain it in part; the other part left unsaid was that the military might not succeed and it will eventually fall to the unorganized militia.”

“I'd buy that if we'd been issued something heavier than the .50 caliber rifles we have, like a couple of Ma Deuces or M240s.”

“The M2HB would be impractical except for fixed defenses because of the weight. Maybe they were short on M240s and M249s.”

“I wouldn't take an M249 as a gift, too unreliable. I guess that means that we're limited to what we have.”

“Oh ye of little faith. What did the Captain say about my ID when the subject came up?”

“Yeah, he said, *Sergeant Major you can keep yours, right?*”

“Right and all they did was to restore me to temporary active duty status with that endorsement they made. With that endorsement, a pair of ACUs, and two NCOs along for support, I don’t see a problem getting anything we want. I’ll have to sign for it and turn it back in when this is over, but we’ll have anything we need.”

“How about some toe poppers (M14) and bouncing Betties (M16)?”

“I really doubt that, most of them were deployed in Korea, but I’ll ask.”

The mines we were discussing were anti-personnel. Any available anti-tank mines had probably already been deployed to the border. Since Pete didn’t have the ACUs, Jonas went through his uniforms and found a shirt and trousers that fit Pete. We added the rank insignia to our uniforms and found our patrol caps.

“Let’s hope we can pull this off. They’ll run my ID and determine I’m back on active duty and I’ll cover you two by indicating you’re former Army I talked into helping me. I’ll say that you’re waiting for the IDs to be delivered and they can check their database and see where you were temporarily activated in Texas.”

“Going for a Ma Deuce?”

“I was thinking a M2A1 with those upgrades like the quick change barrel. We’ll try to get 100 cans of ammo, the AP/APIT combat mix, a 4:1 mix of M2 and M20.”

“How do we explain having M1As instead of M16s?”

“We don’t, I’ll turn on my Command Sergeant Major BS and they’ll forget what the question was.”

We were only an hour from Ft. Leonard Wood and the gate guard stopped us. Jonas handled him his ID and said, ‘Run it.’ The Corporal came back and said his ID was fine but he had to see ours. Jonas countered by having us tell him our Service Number (now SSNs) and for him to look them up.”

“Sergeant Major, they check but were deactivated in Texas.”

“I reactivated them. Whose your Top (First Sergeant)? I’ll explain it to him.”

The Corporal blanched and directed us to the First Shirt’s office. A bit of discussion and the First Sergeant had his people hustling up replacement ID cards for us and was taking notes concerning what Jonas wanted. In the end, we got everything we wanted and more, including the M2A1, the combat mix of ammo belts, plus their total supply of M14 and M16 mines. It wasn’t much, about 100 M14s and 20 M16s. We were limited by weight, not volume as to the amount of ammo we could take home. A can of .50 caliber belted ran about 33 pounds, thus 100 cans ran about 1½ tons, the limit for our trailer.

The other items all went into the bed of the pickup. From a purely practical standpoint, Jonas hadn't updated his address and they thought he still lived near the Fort.

"That's not many mines, how are we going to use them?"

"We use clusters of 1 M16 and 5 M14s. My thought was to put two clusters on either side of the driveway. Can we erect a gate?"

"Pete, how much iron pipe do you have?"

"We'll have to go shopping; I don't have enough to build a gate. I'll get it when I go see the lawyer if you'll draw up some plans and figure out how much we need."

Snake Doc and I worked on a plan resulting in the decision that we could do it with 96' of pipe, 4" or larger; preferably 6" pipe. I wanted 24' sections, 1 to cut in half for the gate posts, 2 for the upper and lower pipes and the remainder to be cut into 4' sections for the vertical supports in the gate. The result would be a gate 5' high clearing the ground roughly 6". The gate posts would be buried 7' in concrete with 5' exposed. We'd need some really heavy duty hinges to support the weight of the gate. I figured I could cut and weld the gate in one day but the concrete supporting the gate posts would need at least 2 weeks to cure with an accelerant.

Pete was gone most of the day seeing his lawyer and locating the iron pipe. The only pipe he could find was schedule 80, 6" iron pipe (schedule usually refers to PVC pipe). The following day after chores, Pete went to work on the gate postholes and Jonas helped me cut the pieces to length and notch the end of the 4' vertical supports with a cutting torch. I cut and he used a grinder to smooth them out. By noon, we were ready to lay out the gate and begin welding. We had lunch first and Pete told us he could use help with the postholes because his digger didn't go down 7'. Jonas volunteered and I was left to do the welding.

I assembled the gate and tack welded the pieces, checking for square before I finished welding the top side. I got Jonas and Pete to help me flip it over, putting the welded side down so I could weld the other side. When I finished, I got them again and we stood the gate up so I could grind off rough spots and make additional welds as needed. It took one more flip to reach the bottom parts which I ground, welded and finished by spraying with zinc chromate primer.

Pete wasn't able to locate the heavy hinges I wanted. Instead, he brought home some 1" rod and some $\frac{7}{8}$ "x2" metal straps that he said I could heat and form into hinges. As you might expect for a man with a large herd of horses, he had a forge, anvil and assorted hammers to make horseshoes. Most of the time, he used a farrier who made the shoes using his equipment. Neither Pete nor the farrier he used believed in the glue on shoes or aluminum shoes. The farrier adjusted each shoe to assure a perfect fit. Pete check the hoofs weekly and it seemed like the farrier was also here weekly, even after the HEMP.

One major thing changed after the HEMP, the farrier accepted both food and firewood in payment for his services. In those cases where the amount of work done exceeded the value of the food and firewood, Pete paid in either junk silver, bullion silver or gold. Because of the HEMP we didn't do trail rides and the hoofs needed more care than they had previously. Those 4 horses we took to Texas benefited greatly from that desert terrain.

The following day, I began building the hinges and Pete and Jonas installed the gateposts and filled the holes with concrete. I looked in an encyclopedia Pete had and basically decided on a hinge design used by the Egyptians. The hinge support would be a vertical plate $\frac{7}{8}$ " thick by 2" in the vertical created by welding two straps together. I use the 1" rod and form the two straps around it, welding everything in place. The strap would be 9" long and I cut square slots in the gatepost, allowing the strap to be inserted to the back side and welded front and back. That would create the hinge pin.

I intended to form two straps that were formed around $\frac{1}{2}$ the diameter of the end post and drilled front and back to allow them to be bolted to the end post. Beyond that, the straps would be heated and formed around a $1\frac{1}{8}$ " drill bit and the ends welded. This would form the hinge pin receptacle. I'd make 3 hinges for the gate and to insure Hercules couldn't come along and lift the gate off the pivot pins, threaded the end of the pins and use lock nuts. To lock the gate, I'd make straps formed in a circle at the back end, which could slide over the gatepost and secure them with padlocks or bolts. The gate could swing either way if it was not locked and Pete didn't want me to weld on a stop.

The farrier showed up without notice since there weren't any phones. He checked the horses and trimmed their hooves and shod those that needed it. He came and went for the better part of a week. By now, we were beyond anxious because we understood that the battle would be joined by now. None of the EAS stations broadcast any news concerning the US-Mexico border. If I were a conspiracy theorist, I'd have been in hog heaven.

With nothing better to do, we added a gate to the new quarter section and plowed it. Pete announced over dinner one night that this coming year, that 160 would be planted in canola and the other fields would consist of the 40 acres of alfalfa, 20 acres of pasture and 80 acres each of corn, wheat (half durum, half hard red) and oats. Just as we finished dinner, the farrier, Mike, knocked on the door with a list of work he'd done.

Pete grabbed Jonas and me and we loaded the canned goods and staples into Mike's pickup. He also asked for 5 cords of firewood, saying he'd come back and pick it up one pickup load at a time. Pete calculated the value of what Mike took and asked, "Do you want gold or silver to cover the balance?"

The Hunting Shack – Chapter 15

“I don’t suppose you’d have a rifle and ammo, would you?”

“We have several Mexican Army FX-05s.”

“Magazines?”

“All you can use and plenty of 5.56×45mm ammo.”

“Good gun?”

“They’re similar to the H&K G-36.”

“Could I get two?”

“Sure, how many magazines?”

“Twenty too many? I have ALICE gear and that would fill 6 pouches and leave one magazine for each rifle.”

“Get a cup of coffee and we’ll load it into your pickup.”

When we’d searched the enemy soldiers they also had bayonets and hand grenades so we threw them in. When the truck was loaded, we returned to the home and Pete asked for a second time, “Gold or silver?”

“Didn’t the guns cover the balance?”

“We took the rifles from some Mexican soldiers plus bayonets and hand grenades. The ammo came from the Missouri National Guard so it wouldn’t be right not to pay you for the work you did.”

“Don’t suppose you have a small generator you could spare?”

“Don, do you want to part with yours?”

“We do have the QDRV, so I suppose we could.”

“Mike, do you know where you can get gasoline?”

“Not really.”

“I’ll give you 6 drums of stabilized gas, but that generator of Don’s will only run 13 hours on 7 gallons at full power; probably longer at half power.”

“How big is it?”

“Seven kilowatts with a 12kw surge for when something kicks in. You’d have to check some gas stations and see if you could pump some fuel from their tanks or buy it if they have power.”

“Is there any room in my truck bed for the barrels of gas?”

“It’s pretty full Mike,” I replied. I have some 5-gallon cans of stabilized gas. Let me run down to the shack and get them. Only 3 are full, but I can fill the other 4 from my gas tank.”

“Don, fill them from mine,” Pete directed.

While I was getting the cans and filling the 4 empties, Jonas gave Mike a quick rundown on the Mexican rifle. Mike was ear to ear grins when he pulled out.

“It would be smarter to just move him out here; I’ll talk to him about it tomorrow. We could park a mobile home for them and hook it up to the utilities.”

That DGDB Cummins Pete had was rated at 90kw prime, enough for the house, 2 trailers and the remainder of the buildings. Pete and Jonas got involved in a conversation about trailers and Marie and I told them good night.

“What were they talking about?”

“I think it was about getting Jonas and Molly a trailer. It only makes sense; I think they’ll be staying a while. If Mike and his family moved here into a second trailer, we’d increase our security by at least two, maybe more.”

“Who are you counting as security?”

“Everyone except Sarah. You have been practicing haven’t you?”

“Every chance I get; which isn’t as often as I’d like. Do you really believe we’ll end up in the middle of a fight?”

“Had you asked me that when I was in Texas, I would have said no. You know how the media is about reporting bad news and patting us on the back if we win some little battle in nowhere-ville. If that battle is happening as expected it should be on the news. From what little we learned, the plan was massive airstrikes followed by an armor engagement.”

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The battle on the border was going according to plan. Some Chinese units were able to bypass American units and avoid a confrontation with anyone. One Battalion had a relatively young officer in charge, equivalent to a Lt. Colonel, and a real go getter with a specific mission which included avoiding enemy contact at all cost. Since a Battalion is made up of several Companies, the Colonel probably had 600-800 soldiers.

Their mission was to destroy as many oil fields as possible, starting in the Midland area and moving to Oklahoma. From there, they'd strike targets of opportunity on their way to Kansas City and then move across Missouri to St. Louis. Their Battalion was the equivalent to one of our Ranger Battalions, though possibly larger. Engrossed in the battle on the border, our military was hard pressed to send troops to hunt them down.

Ladies and gentlemen, the vice president.

The Pentagon advises that a force of Chinese troops has successfully bypassed our border units and has attacked oil facilities in the Midland, Texas and Ponca City, Oklahoma areas. We are, therefore, calling on the unorganized militia to locate the unit and stop them. Our best estimate is that they will next strike Wichita, Kansas.

Ammunition remains available at National Guard Armories, but supplies are limited. We request that all God fearing American Patriots track this unit down and put an end to their rampage. Additional information concerning their activities will be broadcast by the EAS.

"No sweat, it's a long way to Wichita. Do you think we can find two trailers?"

"We should check the trailer park in Camdenton and others in the area. It shouldn't be that hard to find a few empty ones. Maybe we can lease them or buy them outright, if the price is right."

We found two older 14'x70' trailers that could be bought for a combination of food and ammo. The owner of the trailer park indicated that they had been rental units and he'd disconnect them from the utilities and arrange transport for a one year supply of food for four plus 2,000 rounds each of 7.62x51mm and .45ACP, both FMJ. If we had electricity, he'd sell us heat tape and pipe insulation for junk silver. He needed 6 days to disconnect both trailers, but could transport both on the 7th day.

During the six days, we installed propane lines, water lines, sewer lines and electrical conduits. After they were delivered, we spent two days on each trailer installing the stands, connecting the utilities, adding heat tapes, pipe insulation and the skirting. The propane company delivered 2 additional 1,100-gallon tanks, installed and filled them. Pete had a 1,100-gallon tank they used for the hot water heater and kitchen stove and he had it topped off.

“Until the Mongol Horde gets to Missouri, I think we should just stay here. We did our bit on the border and, as it turns out, have been amply rewarded. I need time to locate the seeds we need for next year. I’d like to find a burr mill to grind the wheat into flour too.”

“I wouldn’t know where to look, Pete.”

“I think I do, don’t worry about it.”

Pete found a new Meadows Steel Burr Mill, 240v single phase with a 5hp motor. According to the seller, it was one of the most versatile mills available and could grind anything from wet to dry. The dealer had ordered it from Pleasant Hill Grain in Nebraska for a customer with only a down payment. The customer never picked it up and he let Pete have it for the balance due, in gold. The customer had specified a stand with casters making the mill semi-portable. Pete said we could grind wheat, corn and oats. Ground oats produce Scottish oatmeal; American oatmeal is rolled oats. We were one step closer to being self-reliant.

There are always things that you can’t make or produce easily; bathroom tissue and coffee come to mind. Coffee is vacuum sealed with a long shelf life and bathroom tissue should last until it’s used, if properly stored. You can grow some herbs and spices, but others are imported and you must buy them at the store. If you watched Emeril Lagasse on TV, you’ve heard about spices going bad on the shelf. That’s mostly after they’ve been opened and exposed to oxygen.

While the lights might be out, it didn’t mean that nothing was available. Rather, it meant that the selection was limited, both in brands and quantities. The difference between a house brand and a brand name might be something as minor as the amount of salt in the product; again, tuna is a good example. That also applies to canned vegetables or any product containing salt. While some products may be specifically produced for a large grocery chain, smaller chains buy the products with just a little too much salt and have their labels applied.

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“How’s the new house?”

“Better privacy, we like that. Did Mike agree to move out here?”

“I had to offer to store his supply of factory made horseshoes, let him use the forge, anvil and assorted hammers. Plus, he wanted two more of the rifles with magazines and ammo.”

“Factory made?”

“He starts with factory made and adjusts it to fit. The most common type of horseshoe used today is made of steel. Steel horseshoes are readily available and easy to attach.

They can be modified with minimal skill. Most farriers use only steel horseshoes. However, sometimes a horse needs another type of horseshoe and there are several types.”

“Can he make them from scratch?”

“He’s certified, so I presume he can.”

“But why here?”

“We have the largest herd of horses in the immediate area and we’re breeding more to keep our herd at the same size or larger.”

“Why larger? Do you think we’ll actually have a GTW and end up back in the late 19th century?”

“That’s the thing, Don; I just don’t know. What happens if we do defeat the Chinese? We’re damned if we do and damned if we don’t.”

“Is that why you’ve been holding on to the heifers and some of the gilts?”

“We need to replace stock. However with the present situation, I believe that the demand for food will increase. The locker plant is running 18 hour days and using generator power. They’ve hired more meat cutters, too. That’s why I want to plant 80 acres of wheat this year and bought that Meadows burr mill. We can provide much of what they need in Camdenton and Lebanon and if some of the other folks plant victory gardens, no one should go hungry.”

Remember I said that when Pete sent his kids off they took what they brought? Do you also remember that each family had a one year supply of food per person? Plus, he gave them money to buy a generator. Under the circumstances, it was generous; but, I have a bias and maybe shouldn’t say that. OTOH, before this is over, it might not matter.

Three days later, EAS reported a Chinese Battalion had been surrounded and wiped out in the area of Emporia, Kansas. The news continued, reporting that our enemies had experienced *over 50%* casualties. Don’t forget, a casualty isn’t the same as a fatality although with so many, it might not matter. We detach personnel to care for our wounded, maybe they don’t. None of our ground troops entered Mexico and none of our aircraft landed there although the aircraft left a lot of ordnance. Apparently that Captain had good information. The only bomb we could think of that was dropped by the C-130J was the GBU-43/B aka MOAB. The bomb could also be delivered by the C-17 but the US only had 15 bombs in inventory, left over from Iraqi Freedom.

To continue with the news report, the Chinese had withdrawn to regroup and the Mexican Army moved further south to give them room. No matter what deal Mexico struck with the Chinese, it assumed the Chinese would win. If they didn’t, the repercussions

could be horrific. Geez, we might even tear up NAFTA. It was a Fox News station so that might explain the reporter's opinion.

The Hunting Shack – Chapter 16

Our satellites revealed that the Chinese were standing up their missiles, but we didn't get the news because the relay satellites had all been taken out. Neither did we see the missiles lift off, but radio reports were quickly passed and the government knew they were coming. The first clue any of the American public had was like that scene in *The Day After* when Whiteman ABF started launching missiles. The only problem was, Whiteman no longer had missiles and the bombers were on the border.

Perhaps TPTB decided that a 15 minute warning would be worse than no warning at all. Our first clue came when a sun exploded over Kansas City and moments later, another over St. Louis. We scrambled; Marie headed for the shack to get our food and lock the shack. Jonas, Pete and I secured the livestock and Molly helped Sarah move the food from the house to the shelter. Mike and his kids helped Stephanie move their food and clothes to the shelter. He and the boys went back for their firearms and ammo.

Mike had only been given a brief tour of the shelter when they moved because at the time it didn't appear to be needed. It was a flurry of activity, pulling radios, locking vehicles and buildings, and getting the livestock down the 10% grade. We were mostly rattled due to the lack of warning but it made us move faster.

As we prepared to enter the shelter, we could finally see the mushroom cloud rising over Kansas City. My thoughts went immediately to my three cousins; like them or not, they were family. In the Kansas City area, Janice and Mel would be dealing with the immediate effects of the attack. In St. Louis, it would be Teresa and Matt. Pat and Sally should be safe for now in Jefferson City.

At Pete's insistence, each family had at least one General class amateur radio operator and a radio provided by Pete and Sarah as part of their preparations. I remembered Pete saying, *They also have a covered trailer that Sarah and I fixed up for them. Each trailer contains a one year deluxe food supply for each member of their family from Walton. They have Coleman lanterns, large dual fuel stoves, firearms, ammo and anything they might need to get here.*

I guess the only thing they lacked were the cowboy guns Pete wouldn't let them take. No one had said anything about a shelter and since their kids bugged out and came here to shelter, did that mean they didn't have them? This wasn't the best time to bring the subject up. Unlike the HEMP attack, we didn't really feel the ground shake this far from the targets. The HEMP attack and the shaking had been mere coincidence, a medium shake on the New Madrid Seismic Zone down in the boot heel.

Would this be an all-out GTW or a limited exchange between China and the US? I pondered the question and decided that had I been in charge, it would depend upon the information available. No or limited information would force me to retaliate against all known enemies. Full information as to the source would permit selective retaliation. I didn't know that TPTB had limited information relayed by radio from halfway around the

world. I didn't know that we had launched on both of our main enemies, China and Russia.

Russia had viewed the Chinese preparations with real concern and had raised the status of their forces. When China only attacked the US, they turned their concern towards the target country, us. When we launched against China and them, they retaliated against us and China. Pakistan used the excuse of China's launch to launch against India and India retaliated. The outcomes of the attacks were, by country: Russia had a significant portion of its population sheltered; China didn't have shelters for most of its population; India basically wiped out Pakistan and suffered far fewer casualties.

The US, lacking a Civil Defense Program, had limited sheltering capabilities and hadn't notified the population of the incoming attacks. Congress didn't get to the Greenbrier, er, Marriott, the president was at Cheyenne Mountain overseeing the activity on the border and Joe Biden was at Mt. Weather. The only sure survivors of the initial attack would be the people who had home shelters, a very small percentage of the population.

There would be others who found shelter in basements, municipal buildings or other places that would protect them from the radiation. The next issue for them would be food and water. And, given everything they'd need, many would probably recall the old, bad, information that you only needed to shelter for 343 hours, a little over 14 days. That was only true if the peak radiation level were 100R. I had something I'd copied from a story:

When the bombs went off, the wind was out of the west at about 15mph. Here's the damage caused by each 1mT bomb:

Wind speed: 15 mph
Wind direction: due east
Time frame: 7 days

3,000 Rem
Distance: 30 miles
Much more than a lethal dose of radiation. Death can occur within hours of exposure. About 10 years will need to pass before levels of radioactivity in this area drop low enough to be considered safe, by US peacetime standards.

900 Rem
Distance: 90 miles
A lethal dose of radiation. Death occurs from two to fourteen days.

300 Rem
Distance: 160 miles
Causes extensive internal damage, including harm to nerve cells and the cells that line the digestive tract, and results in a loss of white blood cells. Temporary hair loss is another result.

90 Rem

Distance: 250 miles

Causes a temporary decrease in white blood cells, although there are no immediate harmful effects. Two to three years will need to pass before radioactivity levels in this area drop low enough to be considered safe, by US peacetime standards.

Radius of destructive circle: 1.7 miles

12 pounds per square inch

At the center lies a crater 200 feet deep and 1000 feet in diameter. The rim of this crater is 1,000 feet wide and is composed of highly radioactive soil and debris. Nothing recognizable remains within about 3,200 feet (0.6 miles) from the center, except, perhaps, the remains of some buildings' foundations. At 1.7 miles, only some of the strongest buildings – those made of reinforced, poured concrete – are still standing. Ninety-eight percent of the population in this area is dead.

Radius: 2.7 miles

5 psi

Virtually everything is destroyed between the 12 and 5 psi rings. The walls of typical multi-story buildings, including apartment buildings, have been completely blown out. The bare, structural skeletons of more and more buildings rise above the debris as you approach the 5 psi ring. Single-family residences within this area have been completely blown away – only their foundations remain. Fifty percent of the population between the 12 and 5 psi rings are dead. Forty percent are injured.

Radius: 4.7 miles

2 psi

Any single-family residences that have not been completely destroyed are heavily damaged. The windows of office buildings have been blown away, as have some of their walls. The contents of these buildings' upper floors, including the people who were working there, are scattered on the street. A substantial amount of debris clutters the entire area. Five percent of the population between the 5 and 2 psi rings are dead. Forty-five percent are injured.

Radius: 7.4 miles

1 psi

Residences are moderately damaged. Commercial buildings have sustained minimal damage. Twenty-five percent of the population between the 2 and 1 psi rings has been injured, mainly by flying glass and debris. Many others have been injured from thermal radiation – the heat generated by the blast. The remaining seventy-five percent are unharmed.

We were about 170 miles by road or 132 miles as the crow flies from Kansas City on a heading of southeast (124.9 degrees). We should get little of the fallout from there if the prevailing wind remained out of the west. The biggest city directly west of us was Wichita, Kansas. Much further to the west and capable of producing significant fallout was

Colorado Springs. We should be safe and all of the livestock was in that heavily sealed (against water) underground barn. (Remember, Lake of the Ozarks country.)

Rather than dwell on details of how we spent the next weeks waiting for the radiation to fall to a safe level, I'll summarize. Our number 1 priority was caring for the animals who didn't like the underground barn. The horses were the most seriously affected, and we spent a lot of time keeping them calmed down. The chickens and hogs could have cared less, as long as they were fed, and in the case of the hogs, had a wallow.

Another major activity was getting to know Jonas and Molly plus Mike and Stephanie better. Their boys had their noses buried in either watching DVDs or playing computer games. The only time they showed any interest outside of that was when they were given firearms and extensive training, mostly by Jonas, with me pitching in occasionally. They started with the Mexican FX-05s. Pete had some Glock model 19s and gave them to Stephanie, Michael, Jr. and James to use. Mike got a Glock model 21. When the discussion turned to the cowboy guns, Marlin 1894 Cowboys in .45 Colt and Ruger old model Vaqueros in the same caliber went to the boys and her. Mike got an 1895 cowboy and a used Vaquero with a 7½" barrel in .45 Colt. Pete pulled out a gun belt with 10 .45-70-405 loops and 24 .45 Colt loops.

The one thing about our trip to the border that bothered me was Jonas's behavior. CSM or not, he displayed an inordinate level of skill when it came to fighting a 4th generation war. I'd watched *The Unit* when it was on TV which was based on show producer Eric L. Haney's book, *Inside Delta Force: The Story of America's Elite Counterterrorist Unit*.

William S. Lind wrote at length about 4th generation war and I had his paper on my laptop. Unfortunately I didn't have a copy of Haney's book. Anyway it was just a lot of little things, the perfect Spanish and English, he was obviously well educated. And, like Dennis Haysbert and Regina Taylor, Jonas and Molly were African Americans. He had a presence, for lack of a better term; self-assured, had an answer for every situation, or a damned good guess. He also knew a lot about guns that the US military didn't generally use. Hell, he even had advanced medical skills.

I cornered Pete in the barn one day and asked, "Is there anything you want to tell me about Jonas?"

"Like what?"

"Like was he with Detachment D?"

"He says not; but I've wondered the same thing myself. We were out touch for a few years so I suppose it could be possible. That *Snake Doctor* handle bother you?"

"It's not so much that I'm bothered; it's that he has a lot more training than he admits to. I haven't seen a firearm that he doesn't know inside out. The training he gave Mike's

family was clear, concise and left no questions unanswered. We don't actually know what information is coded on his military ID card either. It seems to open any door."

"He got out in the mid '90s and went to work for Ft. Leonard Wood as a civilian. He never said where he was stationed before he retired. When I asked, he changed the subject."

"I suppose it doesn't matter," I said. "After all, he's on our side."

Mike said he'd initially learned the farrier trade from his father. He'd gone out to Snohomish, Washington and attended Mission Farrier School. It took over 100 head of horses just to recover his tuition. Then, he'd met Stephanie, they'd dated and married. The two boys came about a year apart and they decided two was enough. Neither boy, Michael, Jr. 14 and James 13, showed any interest in the trade. When he was old enough for the military, it was an all-volunteer force and he hadn't volunteered. His older brother had been killed in Desert Storm in a vehicle accident.

"Pete, I've been wondering about my cousins. Do you think they're ok?"

"I suppose that depends on where the warhead exploded in relation to where they lived. They all have basement shelters that Sarah and I paid to have constructed. If they moved the food back into their shelters and found the generators we gave them money for, they might be ok. Either way, worrying about them won't change anything. For sure, I think Pat, Sally and their kids are ok. Having guilty thoughts about our sending them away?"

"I suppose."

"They made their bed and have to sleep in it. I regret that they weren't here and, at the same time, know that I made the right decision. I don't know where we went wrong raising them, but they sure didn't turn out like we expected. You, on the other hand, don't appear to be afraid of work."

"I've never had a choice. If I wanted to eat, I had to work. I earned a good living welding. Now, I'm learning to farm and I never once thought I'd be a farmer. It is an important trade, people have to eat. They say the average farmer feeds over 100 people for a year."

"I think it's probably higher than that, Don. I'd guess closer to 150. We can grow everything on this farm without much extra work except for rice. We could grow that too, if we wanted to put in the work and we could get the seed. If we could get even one bag of seed, we could grow that to produce more seed provided it was a pure strain and not a hybrid."